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AFGHAN PROSPECTS.

THE news of Monday gives good ground for hoping that the Afghan war, at least in its present form, is virtually at an end. But while we receive this intelligence with great satisfaction, it would be idle to conceal from ourselves the possibility, or even probability, that grave difficulties may yet be found in Yakoob Khan's uncertain tenure of power, and the disorganised condition into which we have thrown the country. To exchange hostilities against the Ameer for an alliance with him in the endeavour to coerce his disaffected subjects, or for a guerilla warfare with mountain clans who may fancy they see their opportunity in every retrograde movement of our troops, would be no great gain. It is true, indeed, that bitter experience was supposed to have armed our Indian Government against all temptations to take part in any dynastic rivalry. But the recent policy of that Government has scorned all lessons of experience, and the undisciplined impulses of wild tribes can never be counted on. On the other hand, we do not hear of any claimant to the throne who is at present in a position to give serious trouble, and the mountaineers may perhaps have discovered that British gold is preferable to British steel. We are inclined then to hope for the best; and we are bound to acknowledge that the respectful and ceremonious reception accorded to Yakoob Khan at Gandamak confirms the sincere desire of the Government to bring a troublesome, expensive, and needless war to a close. Major Cavagnari, with a guard of honour, awaited the Ameer six miles from the camp. The approach was lined with troops for two miles. A royal salute was fired from a heavy battery, the last gun being timed to announce the alighting of Yakoob Khan at the tent prepared for him. Then followed visits of ceremony and propitiatory cups of tea, in handing which the attendant was "careful never to turn his back on the Ameer." The latter, with surely ironical courtesy, was good enough to express a fear that the officers present had experienced much discomfort in advancing so far into a country like Afghanistan. This remark, we are told, was judiciously answered, and the distinguished guest is said to have won the favour of the camp by "his very dignified and correct demeanour."

All this is as it should be. But we cannot repress a persistent feeling that more of the *suaviter in modo* at the time of Sir Neville Chamberlain's ill-omened mission might have saved some valuable English lives, and several millions of English pounds. The Ministry will naturally make the most of a restored peace, which ought never to have been disturbed.

But even if the Ameer should prove complaisant, and his people submissive, it is difficult to see what essential benefit to either England or India we are likely to get at all commensurate with the sacrifices we have made, both of national resources and national character. There is as yet no authentic information about the terms likely to be demanded. A conjecture or a rumour as to their nature was indeed contained in the *Petersburger Zeitung*. And there would be nothing unprecedented in our learning from foreign sources what is concealed from us by our own rulers. But the report is in all probability premature, and founded on the usual procedure of a Government loving the ostentation of conquest, yet restrained by the relentings of a doubtful generosity which prompts it to plunder its own subjects rather than a foreign foe. Thus it is said that a subsidy will be paid to Yakoob Khan, in return for which he will keep the passes open; also that the revenue of the districts held by the British will belong to the Ameer. An offensive and defensive alliance is to be concluded for certain eventualities. The northern fortresses are to be made stronger under British supervision, and a portion of the cost entailed is to be defrayed by England. England also is to give the Ameer her moral support in the event of his throne being menaced by interior complications. What is known to German biblical scholars as "the higher criticism" would probably discern in such a report nothing but a satirical parody on our tenancy of Cyprus and our generous protectorate of Turkey in Asia. It would be difficult indeed to say that anything is incredible where Lord Beaconsfield or Lord Salisbury are concerned; but the notion that after we have deliberately incurred the expense of stealing a scientific frontier from the Ameer, we are to incur the further cost of strengthening his northern fortresses, and at the same time to pay him a subsidy for allowing us to do so, is surely a fresh invention of Russian malice.

As there are none who preach the value of temperance with so touching a pathos as inebriates, so the drunkards of military extravagance can at times be eloquent on economy and peace. "The leading journal," in commenting upon the Indian news, announced on Monday, probably for the fiftieth time, that henceforward "our triumphs will be those of peace." And "for these," it is added, "there is unfortunately only too great room." The disordered state of the Indian finances is said to be "a matter of grave concern to thoughtful minds in India and in this country. A load of debt continually increasing in magnitude is acknowledged to mean, in a country like India, "a great deal of very real suffering to the inhabitants." "We already wring out from the poor cultivator well-nigh the last farthing we can draw from him. If he is helpless and resourceless under the pressure of famine, it is not seldom because his surplus stock has been drained away in advance, and his possible savings diverted into the public treasury." How then is the pressure to be alleviated? "Public works," we are told, "have been chosen amongst the first departments in which a reduction can be made." Surely no more melancholy or shameful confession was ever made by an Imperial people. The Romans managed to fill their conquered provinces with gigantic works of usefulness, whose remains are a wonder to this day. We, a professedly Christian people, "wring out from the poor

cultivator well-nigh the last farthing" to lavish it in useless wars, while we leave a magnificent province comparatively destitute of the appliances absolutely necessary to raise it to the higher civilisation which is our boast.

A VILLAGE INTERDICT.

MR. LANGHORNE BURTON, of Somersby, near Horncastle, Lincolnshire, and owner of the adjacent village of Bag-Enderby, has incurred what gentlemen in his social position very much dislike—notoriety. Hitherto known, and doubtless respected, only in a select circle of the squirearchy, his name has suddenly become a household word in every Methodist circuit. It has assumed a prominent position in the columns of penny papers, and has been proclaimed by the President of the Conference from the platform of Exeter Hall. This vulgar fame must be peculiarly painful to one of Mr. Langhorne Burton's caste. And when we ask what he has done to bring upon himself so disagreeable a fate, we find that, being a landlord, he has only acted boldly up to the traditional theory of landlordship in English villages; and being conscientiously devoted to the Church as by law established, he has only consistently asserted the claims of that Church as involved in its formularies, and proclaimed in its yet unrepealed canons. That Church is often defended on the ground that it does not mean what it says. And languid Liberals deprecate any troublesome crusade against the tyranny of landowners on the plea that this tyranny has grown obsolete. But Mr. Langhorne Burton has shown that canonical denunciations of schism may still become a cruel weapon, and that the British landlord's claim to be owner of his tenants' souls and bodies, as well as of their farms, is by no means abandoned pretension. Yet though Mr. Langhorne Burton is thrust to the fore, and made to bear the brunt of public contempt and indignation, there is some reason for suspecting that he himself has been a victim of the spiritual tyranny he exercises, and that he is merely a tool in the hands of the Christian gentleman set up by an earthly providence as an example of religion and culture to the villagers of Bag-Enderby.

It is often asked, especially by languid Liberals, What would become of remote villages if there were no Established Church? The best answer to such a question is to ask what does become of them now? Look at Bag-Enderby. It has only a population of fifty-six men, women, and children. Yet the Wesleyans have had religious meetings there for thirty years past. And we strongly suspect that their active ministrations left the consecrated servant of the State very little to do for the 250*l.* he annually received. The latter, however, was not the whole of his income. He was rector of Somersby as well as of Bag-Enderby, and the former yielded him 240*l.* a year. This clergyman was the Rev. L. B. Burton, whose name would suggest relationship to the squire. If this be so, it is all the more remarkable that while the Rev. L. B. continued to hold the livings, the Wesleyans were allowed to conduct their meetings in peace. It seems an odd thing to compliment anyone on a toleration which ought to be a matter of course. But bearing in mind what the Church is in the rural districts, we are obliged to say that this abstinence from persecution was very creditable to the old rector. Now, however, a new rector of Somersby has arisen, and though Bag-Enderby is said to be vacant, his influence no doubt extends there. This new rector is the Rev.

T. H. Lister, J.P.; and his name is worth mentioning, because of the curious reference to him in a letter of Mr. Langhorne Burton, announcing his decree against Wesleyanism in his dominions.

At the beginning of March, the Rev. S. McAulay, superintendent of the circuit in which Bag-Enderby lies, was informed by the members there that Mr. Langhorne Burton had strictly forbidden the householder in whose cottage they had met to allow them the use of his room any more. Those who know what Wesleyanism is, in its best form amongst the poor, will easily imagine the grief and distress occasioned by such a prohibition. On the one hand conscience would condemn "the fear of man which bringeth a snare." On the other hand habitual dependence, long security, and rural monotony are not favourable to the martyr spirit. Simple souls placed thus "in a strait betwixt two" often suffer considerable torture. And the institutions which not only enable but encourage mortals like Mr. Langhorne Burton to inflict that torture appear to us hardly so admirable as they do to languid Liberals who lisp of sweetness and light. However, Mr. McAulay in defence of his flock wrote an exceedingly civil, in fact almost humble, letter, requesting Mr. Langhorne Burton to "reconsider his interdict and remove it." The phrase is good. It is suggestive of the peddling pettiness of the imitation with which our village Popes do homage to their masters of the Vatican. The word that used to strike terror into empires now finds employment only on the scale of Bag-Enderby and its landlord. However, Mr. Langhorne Burton, glorying no doubt like many other weak people in his resolute firmness, not only maintained his "interdict," but informed Mr. McAulay that a continuance of the meetings would probably result in "the removal from Bag-Enderby of all the members of his body." "I wish to have *as tenants none*," adds this model landlord, with pious emphasis, "but thorough Church people, and consider myself quite at liberty to choose such as I like, without being dictated to by anybody." Mr. Langhorne Burton is very sensitive to dictation. It is a good quality; but we fear it is associated with a lamentable want of imagination; otherwise he might be able to conceive the feelings of a tenant when "dictated to" in the matter of religious worship. But of this he is clearly incapable. A tenant has no right to keep a conscience. Unfortunately, even Mr. Langhorne Burton cannot relieve him of a soul. "Your letter," continues this consistent and thorough Churchman, "I have placed in my rector's hands." Surely the rector interfered then, and reminded his squire that this is the nineteenth century, not the seventeenth? We do not hear of any such interference, and we rather fancy that this reference to "my rector" explains the sudden change of treatment that the Wesleyans have experienced. The present President of the Wesleyan Conference has been an amiable friend of the Church wherever it was possible for him to show a kindness. It is not unlikely that he and many other Wesleyans may hereafter find that they owe a debt of gratitude, at present imperceptible, to consistent Churchmen and landlords like Mr. Langhorne Burton.

DISESTABLISHMENT IN SCOTLAND.

THE divergent views of policy expressed by the leader of the Opposition and by its chief Parliamentary whip, have given rise to much and deserved criticism. Lord Hartington, during his tour in Scotland last autumn, caused it clearly to be understood that he was waiting for a sign from the constituencies before committing himself to the question of disestablishment in that country. The reasonable inference drawn from his lordship's speeches was that he would incorporate this question in the immediate creed of the Liberal party if strongly pressed to do so. The friendly challenge was at once taken up, and for several months past the subject has been earnestly discussed in its practical bearings, not only in Scotland but in England and Wales. Public

opinion is being prepared for this new stage of the great contest, especially in anticipation of the next general election. This policy has not been entered upon without earnest and anxious thought; but, after the best consideration that could be given to it, the leaders of the movement, feeling their responsibility, have deemed it right to commit themselves to the enterprise. Now that it is assuming a practical form, and is certain to be an important factor in the impending appeal to the constituencies, some official and hereditary leaders of the Whig section of the Liberal party have taken alarm. Speaking last month at Cupar and at Devonport, Mr. Adam, M.P., strongly advised that the question should not be brought to the front. He deprecates any such tests being applied to candidates, and evidently wishes to be unembarrassed by the introduction of what he regards as an ecclesiastical apple of discord. When called upon to explain his meaning, and especially when the divergence of opinion between himself and Lord Hartington was pointed out, Mr. Adam simply replied that his advice was not new, but was only an avowal of opinions long entertained. It must not be supposed, however, that he would make such statements without authority, and therefore it must be concluded that these latest official utterances of the Liberal whip are to be regarded as indicative of the policy to be pursued by the Whig section of the party.

We are glad to observe that no time has been lost in traversing these statements. At the meeting of the Synod of the United Presbyterian Church, held last week, a clear and emphatic protest was raised, not only once but repeatedly, during the proceedings. Leading speakers declared, amid the approving and enthusiastic applause of the Assembly, that the line of policy laid down by Mr. Adam could not be and must not be followed out. Significant monitions were uttered that if the leaders of the party chose to take the course suggested, they must not reckon upon the support of their Nonconformist friends in Scotland. We give elsewhere a copious abstract of the proceedings, from which it will be seen that without using threatening language, or laying themselves open in any measure to the charge of being vexatious obtrusives, the best men in the Synod, speaking for it as a whole, and for their large and influential community throughout Scotland, distinctly avowed that no mere party exigencies could be allowed to stand in the way of a substantial act of justice, for which the time is fully come. The ground taken up on this question was broad and strong, and the reasons avowed ought to commend themselves to all impartial minds. The season for temporising has passed, and we must no longer humbly wait for such crumbs of comfort as certain Liberals may deign to throw. We anticipate that the approaching meetings of the Free Church of Scotland will also be marked by a decided protest on the part of the growing section of that body which favours disestablishment. Notwithstanding the frantic efforts of Dr. Begg and those who agree with him, the Free Church is rapidly coming round on this subject, and is abandoning the untenable theory which it held for so many years. Our Scotch friends need to be encouraged and helped in every possible way in the struggle which lies before them, and we are glad to know that English Voluntaries are beginning to perceive the practical bearings of the subject upon their own country.

One thing is certain. We must no longer weekly wait upon Whig convenience, which has been the bane to our section of the Liberal party for the last hundred and fifty years. It is indisputable that the Test and Corporation Acts might have been repealed long before if only the Dissenters of the country had been true to themselves, and had firmly maintained their rights. Instead of this, they yielded again and again to what were held to be party reasons of expediency, and accepted such barren comfort as they could find from the specious plea that they must submit to the continuance of these abominable Acts on account of exigencies of State and the good of the nation at large, with the vague assurance that relief should be

granted as soon as possible. All such promises were forgotten as soon as the immediate ends of party politics were attained, and Nonconformists in this country continued for more than a century to endure the injustice and disgrace. Every slight mitigation of the penal laws from which they suffered was conceded as a sop thrown to Cerberus, and was accepted with all humility and thankfulness. Stanhope, Sunderland, Walpole, and other Whig statesmen made use of them for their own purposes, and yet would not concede their just claim. If the Dissenters of the day had been firm and resolute, Walpole's general policy warrants a belief that he would have yielded to clamour what he denied to justice; but while no immediate danger appeared, he would not incur the slightest odium for their sake. In the general election of 1734, the whole strength of Nonconformists was exerted on behalf of his party, but no return was vouchsafed. They represented to the Minister the injustice of such treatment, and reminded him of his own repeated declarations of goodwill to their cause. He listened, assented, and promised, yet did nothing. They were halting, timid, irresolute, humble hangers-on of the great Whig party, and were divided in their own counsels. Hence they reaped pretty much as they had sown.

The significance of all this has now come to be perceived. The ecclesiastical history of that time conveys grave lessons to the present day. If we allow ourselves to be injured and flouted we deserve to suffer. If high principles are to be made to wait on party convenience, we must expect to be reproached and wronged. We urge, therefore, a continuance in the decided course upon which Scottish Dissenters have entered, with a full promise of sympathy and support from their English coadjutors. The Whigs evidently still need to be educated, although for more than five years they have been in the cool shade of Opposition. The invigorating and clarifying process is by no means perfected, and they are only anxious to return as soon as possible to the brightness and the emoluments of office; but they cannot hope to do this without the strenuous support of the Nonconformist wing of the party. This we venture to assert they are not likely to secure unless Mr. Adam's recent utterances are disavowed, and unless his Fabian policy is abandoned. Is it too much to cherish the hope that when Mr. Gladstone delivers, either on the platform or through the Press, a manifesto to his friends in Midlothian, he will in unmistakable and satisfactory terms express his own convictions upon this great question? It has already been pressed on and accepted by many Scotch and English Liberals as an article of their political faith; and it must not be suffered to be put back. Besides, our Whig friends may be quite sure that if they do not choose to adopt it, the present occupants of office will not scruple to do so should their Mephistopheles judge such a course to be safe and politic. The party that was "educated" to accept the "ten-minutes Reform Bill" can be educated to do much more for the sake of retaining office. The Scotch Church is doomed, and its fall as an Establishment may be much nearer than many imagine. The Liberal leaders, speaking through Lord Hartington, asked for an expression of opinion from a large and influential section of their followers. This has been given in unmistakable terms; and we now look confidently to Scotch Liberals and Dissenters to prosecute the work they have begun. Statesmen and eager partisans on all sides will take in ecclesiastical matters the line that is forced upon them; and men of earnest convictions and of Christian resolve can become masters of the situation. The ecclesiastical reforms of the last fifty years are only successive applications of the principle which triumphed in 1828, and the full and ultimate assertion of which is the most urgent question of the day.

THE FARMERS' ALLIANCE.

UNDER the above-named title an association of the farmers and agricultural reformers of England, Scotland, and Ireland has been formed within the last fortnight, and we understand

that the encouragement which its promoters have already received renders them sanguine of achieving a great success. Two conferences which have been held were of a private character, and the proceedings have not been fully reported; but we are informed that a number of influential members of Parliament and farmers were present, and that the most earnest interest in the success of the undertaking was manifested. A provisional committee, composed of capable and energetic men, has been appointed, and it is intended to arrange for a public meeting to be held during the week of the International Agricultural Show, when farmers from all parts of the United Kingdom will be in London. The objects at present agreed to, and those which the Alliance will strive to attain, are to secure the better representation of tenant-farmers in Parliament, to stimulate the improved cultivation of the soil by giving security to the capital of tenants invested in the improvement of their holdings; to obtain the abolition of class privileges involved in the laws of distress and hypothec; to promote the reform of the Game Laws; to obtain the alteration of all legal presumptions which operate unfairly against tenant-farmers; and to secure to county ratepayers their legitimate share in local government. That is a very desirable programme, and will afford abundance of work for the association to carry out for some time to come. We could have wished that the reform of the laws relating to the settlement and transfer of landed estates had also been included, and we understand that there was a strong disposition amongst some of the promoters to add it to the programme; but the lamentable failure of the Land Tenure Reform Association caused others to think it more prudent to leave it out, at least for the present. Farmers, it is thought, feel comparatively little interest in the question, and, besides, might fear to join an association which included amongst its objects a proposal so obnoxious to their landlords as any suggested interference with the laws of land ownership would undoubtedly be. Against this view it may be urged that the other objects are more or less unpalatable to landlords, and that as it is desired to include agricultural reformers other than farmers in the Alliance more would be gained than lost by promising to deal with evils which most people who have studied the subject regard as the most serious of all those which belong to the abominable land system of this country. However, the promoters of the new movement ought to know their own business best, and it is, perhaps, prudent to avoid any possibility of serious division in the ranks of their followers. When they have established the association on a firm basis they may show that they have the courage of their opinions.

Another omission which everyone will notice is that of the Irish tenants' demand for fixity of tenure and valued rents; and in leaving that out we think the leaders of the Alliance are entirely in the right. It augurs well for the success of a union which at first sight might seem impracticable, seeing that it embraces members as divergent in aims as British and Irish farmers undoubtedly are, that the Irish section should be forbearing enough to allow their principal object to be left out. It was, however, felt to be absolutely essential to the success of the undertaking that no object not a common one to the farmers of the three countries should be included. The circumstances of Ireland are peculiar, and few people in England or Scotland understand them. What might be fair for Ireland would be unfair and inexpedient also for the rest of the kingdom. At any rate, whether unfair or inexpedient or not, it is certain that the strongest prejudice exists in this country against the Irish tenants' demand, and the association could not have hoped to obtain many adherents here if it had proposed to go all lengths with its Irish members.

The first object named in the list we have given will be generally admitted to be one of sufficient importance to render the formation of an association for promoting it desirable, even if no other were included. The political dead lock in the English counties is nothing short of a national disaster, and the leaders of the

Irish party feel that if the Alliance will do anything to break up the monopoly of English obstructives, they will be sufficiently rewarded for any concessions which they make to what they regard as British prejudice. Nothing is more needed than a zealous propagation of intelligent independence of political action amongst the county constituencies. Hitherto farmers have been in political leading-strings, voting, to a great extent, as directed by their landlords, and scarcely asserting their right to choose their representatives. In Scotland there has been more show of independence; but the result has not been much better than in English counties. Candidates for Scotch counties have had to make promises; but they have shown by their action that they did so only under the pressure of immediate expediency, and they have been only too glad to allow themselves to be outvoted on any question of agricultural reform by the English squires.

Another method of working which the leaders of the new movement intend to pursue is to hold meetings in the towns, so as to arouse an interest in agricultural reform amongst the borough constituencies. The vast importance to the nation at large of some fundamental alterations in the conditions under which the land of the country is at present cultivated has never been sufficiently acknowledged, simply because it is not generally understood. The public need to be shown, not so much that an increased agricultural produce is a matter of interest to them, but how it may be effected, and what part they can take in bringing it to pass. To attain this object it is necessary to bring the leaders of agricultural reform into a more intimate connection with the public at large than has yet been experienced, and meetings held to explain the objects of the Alliance will do much in the desired direction. It must be made clear to the people of town and country alike that the demands of agricultural reformers are not merely farmers' questions. More than this, it must be shown that farmers should not be left to deal with these questions in exclusive regard to their own interests. We look forward, then, to the proposed propaganda as certain to do much good.

The new association could not have been started at a time more suitable than the present. Farmers have ruin staring them in the face, and the nation has a permanent agricultural decline to fear. That some fundamental revolution of the conditions of farming is absolutely necessary, if the finest agriculture in the world is not to fall into decadence, daily becomes more generally admitted. Farmers, therefore, now have enough to rouse them to spirited action, and the public generally have reason, hitherto but partially recognised, for insisting on the reformation of our land system; and it will be strange indeed if the Farmers' Alliance does not meet with such a liberal measure of support as will enable its earnest and energetic leaders to make it a power in the country.

SONG OF THE SQUIRE OF BAG-ENDERBY.

(Inscribed, without permission, to Langhorne Burton, Esq.)

"I'm monarch of all I survey,"
The hall and the cottage are mine;
The land, and the timber, and ley,
The pigs, and the sheep, and the kine.
The souls of the people I own,
Their consciences' keeper am I,
Their guide and their ruler alone
In the village of Bag-Enderby.
No worship but mine I permit,
And farmers and labourers must be
All of the real Anglican grit
If they are to be about me.
I admit no Methodist rout,
And if they come in ere I die,
I'll take care to have them kicked out
Of the village of Bag-Enderby.
My rector—he's mine like the rest—
Is the authorised reader of prayer;
Let any schismatic unblest
Appear in this place if he dare!
I may do as I list with my roll
Of tenants of every degree,
Since mine is the only free soul
In the village of Bag-Enderby.
No quarter to Dissent I'll give—
Like rinderpest I'll stamp it out—
No Ranter in my sight shall live,
Nor drawl his prayers, nor sing, nor shout.
True sons of legal Church alone,
Who bear themselves submissively,
These, and no others, will I own
In the village of Bag-Enderby.

DISESTABLISHMENT IN SCOTLAND.

The subject of disestablishment in Scotland has occupied a large proportion of the attention of the Scottish people during the past week. At the Synod of the United Presbyterian Church, which was then holding its sittings, it was very fully debated on Thursday. On the same day the elders of that church discussed, after a breakfast, the religious aspects of the question. On Friday the Dissenters of all parties held their annual breakfast, when it was very fully considered; and on the same day a special conference was held to discuss the recent declarations of Mr. Adam, M.P.

THE UNITED PRESBYTERIAN SYNOD.

On Thursday Dr. HUTTON presented to the Synod the report of the Committee on Disestablishment, which concluded as follows:—

The state of the Churches in Scotland is full of interest as respects this question. The overtures of the General Assembly of the Established Church to the Free Church on the subject of union have been communicated, and have already virtually received from that Church the reply, foreshadowing, doubtless, the formal reply of its General Assembly, that no reunion is possible except on the basis of their whole claim. This simply means that it is impossible. This is in substance the reply, not only to such ecclesiastical communications, but to such measures as are proposed by Sir A. Gordon and others, who ought to be persuaded, though apparently nothing can teach them but events, that they are too late. The spirit of the movement in the Dissenting churches, and not least, we hope and believe, in this Church, is that of increasing strength and ardour, of firm and prayerful purpose that no political or other charming shall draw us aside for a moment from the prosecution of a cause identified with the best interests of our country, the claims of Christian justice, the prosperity and union of the Churches of Christ. The committee recommended that the committee be reappointed, with powers and instructions to watch over the question of disestablishment, and to use all suitable means for its advancement; in particular, remit to them to take such steps as may be necessary in circumstances that may arise, or in view of proposed legislation, to lay the position of the Church before the country or the Government (1) as being firmly opposed to any compromise on the question, or new legislation which may be attempted short of disestablishment and disendowment of the Established Church of Scotland; and (2) while not interfering with the freedom of action of its ministers or members with regard to the filling up of any religious census column—should such be inserted in next census schedule—as holding the taking of a religious census by Government to be objectionable on various grounds of principle, and, as at present demanded, sectarian and unjust.

In submitting the report, the rev. doctor remarked at the outset that the question of disestablishment had more than held its own amid the distractions of the year. It had made distinct advance, and no question was at that moment nearer the heart of the nation. Laborious and subtle efforts to silence its advocacy had totally failed. (Applause.) Referring to Mr. Adam's speeches, Dr. Hutton said the country, in the newest version of officialism, is not to decide that it wants disestablishment. It is to pocket its desires, and wait, with bated breath and whispering humbleness, the permission of unknown authorities to speak. (Laughter.) At all events, whether it speak or be silent, officialism will veto action as it can; and having other fish to fry, will not be able to reach disestablishment for "some time"—(laughter)—in truth, cannot indulge its friends in the hope of even looking at it on return to power. A beautiful commentary on the famous dictum of the Liberal chief. The ripeness so much affected is not the ripeness of the public, but the ripe convenience of certain politicians—some of them bitterly opposed to disestablishment, others really indifferent to its merits, and most of them quite willing to postpone the deed of justice to a nameless future, if not to the Greek kalends. If we were less in the hands of mere party guides, disestablishment would take a front place in any scheme of righteous administration. (Applause.) But whether disestablishment is to come first, or second, or third, is one thing; whether it is to be adopted at all is another. (Applause.) We have some right at this time of day to have aye or no on the merits of the question. Dr. Hutton concluded by saying, that the United Presbyterian Church has by all its actions, and by the committee and many presbyteries, shown that to disestablishment and disendowment, and nothing else or less, it will look. Even some Kirk journals or presbyteries are shrewd enough to see that the joke or the earnest is carried too far. It is not likely to be much heard of this session if again; but it is not to be overlooked as a sign of the restless policy which seeks to aggrandise the Kirk regardless of the existence of Dissent, and to avert or postpone the day of disestablishment. Disestablishment is patriotism because it is righteousness. Tried by every test it is Liberalism. There is no duty of wise citizens more near to the prosperity of these kingdoms than the rectification of the Church and State. We do not dogmatise about times and seasons, but we dare to say in the face of a thousand party managers there is more than enough of ripeness in this matter for willing leaders. (Applause.) We may wish—probably most of us do—the due removal of a too surprising Government; but how is this to be done? The usual method in removing Tories has been simple. Let Dissenters be sacrificed. Let them efface themselves and their principles before the fetish of party. There is another way. Let Churchmen take their turn of the happy despatch. (Laughter)

and applause.) Let them offer themselves as meek victims of necessity. Let pleaders give this best advice to an ardent fraction to begin ere it is too late to recognise at least the equal rights of the majority. (Applause.)

The CLERK stated that there were on the table seven overtures averse to disestablishment, viz., from the Presbyteries of Arbroath, Berwick, Dumfries, Dundee, Dunfermline, Edinburgh, and Kelso. All these were to the effect that the Synod should adopt such measures as it might see fit to secure the disestablishment and disendowment of the Church of Scotland.

Mr. CAMERON, of Arbroath, supported the overture of that Presbytery, remarking in the course of his speech that the Liberal party would fitly crown its long series of efforts on behalf of religious liberty were it to carry them to their only consistent issue in disestablishment. To the Liberal party he appealed to accomplish that issue.

Mr. ROSS, of Coldstream, supported the overture from that Presbytery, saying that Liberationists were now for victory at the earliest moment, and the ecclesiastical condition of the country demanded the most earnest efforts for a concentration of power for that object.

Mr. CROOM (ex-moderator of the Assembly) moved the reappointment of the Disestablishment Committee, and approval of its recommendations. He said that Dr. Hutton's name would go down to posterity in connection with this great object, and he believed when the consummation had arrived he would receive no small honour, whether living or dead, as having taken a great part in its accomplishment. (Loud applause.) Dr. Hutton had spoken very strongly, and he thought very justly, about the census that was to be taken in regard to the maintenance of the Established Church and those belonging to Dissenters. He had to say with Dr. Hutton that he did not care one brass farthing for that census. (Applause.) Suppose it turned out that in the census Dr. Hutton and himself were the only volunteers, they would still be the same that they had been. They stood there, not on a question of policy at all, but on the question of justice, civil liberty, and Scripture truth. That was the foundation they took, and if it were taken away, they would give in at once. Mr. Croom, in a vigorous and lively speech, went on to say that the first thing to be done was to get rid of Lord Beaconsfield and his Ministry, a declaration which was received with loud cheers. He discussed several arguments in support of the Establishment, including the "Political Dissenters" charge.—

And the last thing that was brought against Dissenters was that they were a political body. Now, just fancy that coming from the State Church—(great laughter)—fancy that from the State Church, all the ministers of which at this hour, he supposed, were supporting Disraeli.

Dr. JAMES BROWN: ("Oh, no," and cries of "Oh, yes.") A majority of them.

Mr. Croom: Well, mention any.

Dr. BROWN: Well, not Principal Tulloch—(laughter)—not Dr. Lees—

Mr. Croom: Oh, Principal Tulloch—well, if he is faithful found, it is among the faithless faithful only he. I would say of Principal Tulloch what he said of my friend Dr. Hutton here—"Dr. Hutton still lives." So I would say of Principal Tulloch; he still lives. (Laughter.) But the tree was known by its fruits, and he was pretty sure there was not a man in this assembly or Synod who, excepting from Principal Tulloch's own statement, would ever imagine he was a Liberal. (Cheers and slight hissing from the gallery.) There was, then, a great majority of the ministers of the Established Church using every means in their power to maintain Beaconsfield in power—(cheers and slight hissing)—and what was more—he said it with sorrow and with a kind of shame—that the ministers of the Established Church opposed all the great reforms which had taken place in this country for long years past. (Cheers.) Some of these ministers were now, he understood, faggot voters. (Cheers.) Just fancy a Church of that kind calling Dissenters political Churchmen. ("Order.")

Mr. MIDDLETON (Glasgow) said that the first of any coming reform must be disestablishment. Dr. JAMES BROWN, of Paisley, then rose, and expressed the opinion that it was inexpedient for the Church to continue its agitation in favour of disestablishment, the existence of which he regretted. His remarks were received with great disfavour. He was replied to in an effective speech by the Rev. A. OLIVER, of Glasgow, who said that the policy of waiting was not that of men who had any backbone in them.

Dr. CALDERWOOD then rose, and in a speech of great weight said he went heart and soul with the Church in all its distinctive principles, and that he could not understand Mr. Brown. In conclusion he would ask them to discuss the question with great freedom of mind and heart. They would touch no life interests; they would take account of the life interests of every man holding his place, of every man preparing to occupy that place; but having regard to the very utmost extreme of what may be the claims of life interests in this matter, they sought a higher and a better thing, believing that Christ's Church is purer, freer, more prepared by its past, and fitted to draw its authority more directly from its great Head, and rejoicing in the support of its people. (Applause.)

The resolutions were then carried.

THE ELDERS' MEETING.

The elders' breakfast, at which the religious aspects of the question were discussed, was held on the same morning. Mr. Duncan McLaren occupied the chair, and there was a numerous attendance. The chairman in his opening speech inti-

mated that the subject of conversation was "Disestablishment, viewed from a Scriptural point, and as a help to a higher Scriptural life." He said Disestablishment was one of those questions that, from whatever point of view it was looked at, its desirableness must ever be the same. There were many questions which, when looked at from different aspects, presented various conclusions, but let them look at disestablishment from whatever point of view, religious or political, and they would come to this conclusion alone—that it would bring pure and unmixed good. He proceeded to refer to various points of the question.

Mr. MIDDLETON followed, remarking especially upon the Christian liberality of disestablished churches.

Mr. PEARSON, Glasgow, considered the elders present should do something in their different localities to put forward the question of disestablishment, but in such a way as would not be objectionable. (Hear, hear.) They should treat this question in a Christian spirit; and if they could not present it in this spiritual aspect to their friends, they might hope and pray that they might be affected by it so as to see it was the right thing. To disestablish the Established Church would be a great struggle, and he hoped that in the various districts in which those present lived they would try to work quietly but earnestly.

The meeting was afterwards addressed by ex-Baillie NEIL, of Perth; Mr. FLINT, Ayr; Mr. HUNTER, Campbeltown; Mr. SUTHERLAND, Leith; Mr. LOGIE, Dundee; Mr. BROTHERTON, Portobello; and Councillor SOMERVILLE.

The annual breakfast and meeting of the Dissenters was held on Friday morning in the Upper Queen-street Hall, the Rev. Mr. Croom, ex-Moderator of the Synod, in the chair. There was a large attendance, and among those present were Principal Cairns, Rev. Dr. Hutton, Rev. Messrs. Rankine, Cupar; Graham, Crossgates; Rae, Dumfries; James, Bristo; Ross, Coldstream; Dickson, Auchterarder; Rutherford, Newlands; Wright, Forfar; and Robson, Lauder; Messrs. A. Taylor INNES, advocate; Stewart, Glasgow; Tait, Secetary Liberation Society; R. T. Middleton, Glasgow; and Geo. Pearson, Glasgow.

The CHAIRMAN, in his opening speech, said that the whole Established Church argument was that the State ought to use compulsion in religion. They were opposed to all Establishments because Establishments were opposed to the Word of God. The Established churches appealed to the selfishness of human nature, and the question was a great religious one.

Mr. DICKSON (Auchterarder) said he thought their opponents had little ground to suppose the Dissenters were asleep at their posts. Indications were not wanting that their principles were coming to the front—in Parliament, Church courts, and political meetings, the question was being discussed, and must be discussed with a view to its final settlement. (Applause.) If not in England, here in Scotland, the disestablishment question was ripe for settlement.

Mr. TAYLOR INNES, who was received with loud applause, addressed the meeting at some length. He expressed his dissent from the Establishment, but not from the Church, defining what he meant in that respect. He went on to say that the Legislature of the country had a great province of its own, an almost sacred function; the function of justice; and they of all men were least likely to forget that, because justice in Scotland meant disestablishment. (Applause.) He would make no assertion as to other countries, but he would say that Establishment in Scotland was sheer injustice—simple wrong-doing. (Loud applause.) That was what they meant to say to every Parliament, at every election, to every party in power, and to every party out of power. (Renewed applause.) That was their position as he understood it. He did not, of course, say that they held disestablishment, even in Scotland, to be the end and aim of their Christian Church. On the contrary, he looked upon it as the beginning, their necessary condition, the condition of their religious progress; and he believed that entering on that state they needed to lose nothing of the rich hues of their historic past, while they caught the light upon their faces of the great days to come. (Applause.)

The Rev. W. JAMES, of Edinburgh, gave his reasons for disestablishment, saying that Christian union and co-operation were impossible without it.

Mr. STEWART (Glasgow), representing the Scottish Council of the Liberation Society, said the time had come when the question must be taken to the poll. He called attention to the pamphlet of "Electoral Suggestions" and to the "Draft Scheme for Disestablishment."

Principal CAIRNS said they could not relax their efforts, and that union, after that, was a glorious certainty.

Mr. PEARSON (Glasgow) said they were indebted to the press of the country, and they should bear in mind the very great indebtedness which they owed to one of the newspapers which had kept this subject prominently before the public. ("Hear, hear," and applause.) Through good report and bad report that paper had brought this matter prominently before them. He referred to the *Daily Review*. (Applause.)

The CHAIRMAN expressed his concurrence with what Mr. Pearson had said.

Councillor JOHNSTONE (Dumfries) having moved a vote of thanks to the chairman, the proceedings were brought to a close by the pronouncing of the benediction.

THE CONFERENCE.

The conference on Mr. Adam's recent utterances was held on the same day at the Upper Queen-street Hall. About 100 gentlemen were present, including Principal Cairns, Dr. John Ker, the Rev. Mr. Rankine, Cupar-Fife; the Rev. Mr. France, Paisley; the Rev. Dr. Marshall, the Rev. Dr. Peddie, Dr. Hutton, Paisley; the Rev. Mr. Morison, Leith; Mr. R. T. Middleton, of Hillfoot; the Rev. Andrew Graham, Crossgates; the Rev. Benjamin Martin, Leslie; Messrs. William Hilson, Jedburgh; John McNeil, Perth; Dr. Anderson, Milnathort; the Rev. J. W. Pringle, Jedburgh; the Rev. James Wilson, Dundee; Mr. Duncan McLaren, jun., Edinburgh; W. Robson, S.S.C., Edinburgh; John Yellowlees, Larbert; the Rev. W. B. R. Wilson, Dollar; P. Rutherford, Glasgow; John Wilkie, Ceres; the Rev. David Hay, Glasgow; William Balleny, Edinburgh; the Rev. Thomas J. Dickson, Auchterarder; G. Lambert, Rigg-of-Gretna; the Rev. George Robson, Inverness; W. Alexander, Glasgow; the Rev. John Whyte, Moyness; the Rev. Robert Wishart, Thornhill; the Rev. John Squair, Wigtown; Hugh Steel, Greenock; the Rev. John M'Kerrow, Penicuik; the Rev. John Young, Newburgh; W. Ramage, Glasgow; Councillor Johnstone, Dumfries; the Rev. Mr. Davidson, Greenock; William Flint, Ayr; Thomas Mitchell, Blairgowrie; George Pearson, Glasgow; W. Murray, Anstruther; T. Gibson, Peebles; Andrew Cobb, Montrose; Rev. Thomas Kidd, Moniaive; Rev. George Rae, Dumfries; Baillie Speedie, Kirkcaldy; Rev. R. Russell, Blairgowrie; Rev. Charles G. Squair, New Deer; James Mair, Tarbolton; James Stewart, Glasgow; Rev. Mr. Ross, Coldstream; Rev. David Pirrett, Alex. Hannah, Glasgow; Rev. James Scott, Sanquhar; Rev. George Allen, Leith; Mr. James Middlemas, Edinburgh; Dr. Sutherland, Leith; Mr. Alex. B. Thomson, Edinburgh; Mr. John S. Grierson, Edinburgh; Rev. John Clark, Abernethy; Rev. James Pittendreich, Pittenweem; Rev. James Fraser, Dalkeith; Mr. John Chisholm, Dalkeith; Rev. A. T. Simpson, Dalkeith; Mr. George Birle, Dunfermline; Councillor Somerville, Edinburgh; Rev. W. S. Goodall, Stewarton; Rev. Mr. Robson, Lauder; Rev. J. Aitchison, Falkirk; Rev. Alex. Oliver, Glasgow; Mr. Storrar, Rossi; Mr. James Tait, secretary; Rev. John Pirret, Edinburgh. Mr. Middleton, of Hillfoot, was called upon to preside.

The CHAIRMAN said that Mr. Adam's recent utterances had not been satisfactory, and they met there as representatives to hear the expression of feelings and opinions, from all parts of the country.

Mr. STORER (Auchtermuchty), said it was much to their surprise to see Mr. Adam gradually wavering, but there was not much fear that their candidate, Mr. Bruce, would join them.

Mr. RANKINE, of Cupar, said there was no doubt about the St. Andrews boroughs, and Fife was thoroughly Liberal and Radical.

Mr. PRINGLE, Jedburgh, submitted the following resolution:

Mr. W. P. Adam, M.P., having in speeches at Cupar on the 13th, and at Devonport on the 19th April, used language which conveyed the impression that the question of disestablishment in Scotland is not one to be dealt with by the Government, except at some indefinitely remote period, this conference is of opinion that, without prejudice to the other important work waiting the action of any Liberal Government, the question of disestablishment and disendowment in Scotland demands immediate consideration of a practical kind, and should be embodied among the measures to be placed before the country by the Liberal leaders.

(Applause.) Many of them, he said, must feel that they had been put by certain leading Liberals in a decided fix. Lord Hartington, and he might say Mr. Gladstone, had distinctly said once and again, "Tell us your mind at the polling-booth." Then Mr. Adam came down to Scotland and said, "Hold your tongue; don't speak on this subject." Now, if they were to act like dumb, driven cattle in this matter, and do as they were bid by wire-pullers, whom were they to obey? Were they to obey Lord Hartington, and tell him what they thought and felt, or were they to obey Mr. Adam? It seemed to him they were put in a decided difficulty by the irreconcilable utterances of those two men. He thought that if Mr. Gladstone saw his way to give a clear note on this subject when he came down to Mid-Lothian he would send a thrill of enthusiasm—(applause)—through all the Liberal constituencies in Scotland that would carry the Liberals to the front without doubt. (Applause.) If such a step should alienate a few it would inspire with increased zeal the party generally, and he had no doubt would redound to their great advantage. His great fear in view of holding back on this question was this, what was to happen? Let them suppose that the next Liberal Government was returned unpledged on this question. They proceed, perhaps, for two years to deal with matters of foreign policy and finance. In the meantime, Dissenters would be agitating for Disestablishment. The leaders might again say, "Let us appeal to the country," and thus they would have the whole battle to fight over again.

Baillie SPEEDIE, of Kirkcaldy, seconded the motion, after which Mr. AITCHISON, of Falkirk, expressed his indignation at Mr. Adam's utterances. The Rev. Mr. ROBSON, Inverness, held that the Liberal leaders, if Mr. Adam represented them, were ignoring the debt of gratitude under which the Liberal party lay to the Liberation Society. That society, by what it did in connection with the Disestablishment of the Irish Church and the

Burials Bill, instead of having acted as a disuniting and hindering factor in the composition of the Liberal party, had really been one to which it had owed most in its hours of greatest stress, and that debt of obligation under which they lay to this section of the party furnished them with a claim which the leaders ought to recognise at the present moment.

The Rev. Mr. CLARK, Abernethy, cordially agreed with the motion so far as it pointed out practical action on the part of Dissenters, but he questioned the wisdom of the first part of the resolution referring to Mr. Adam and his statements.

The Rev. Mr. WILSON, Dollar, referred to what Mr. Adam had said not to agitate this question; that the pear was ripening, and would drop into their mouths. They did not, however, expect the Disestablishment pear to drop into their mouths without shaking the tree. (Laughter and applause.)

The Rev. J. WHITE, Moyness, Forres, remarked on Mr. Mackintosh's support of Sir A. Gordon's bill.

Principal CAIRNS said the long and short of his opinion in this question was, that where they could get anything like real and genuine Liberalism independently of the question of Church and State, as distinguished from Conservatism pure and simple, he would have no hesitation in supporting the Liberal who might not be a disestablishment man. He would on no account do anything to cut up the Liberal party. At the same time they should, if possible, whilst getting a genuine Liberal otherwise, get a genuine disestablishment man besides. (Applause.) They ought to use all their political influence in that direction, because that was the only way of gaining their point. The question was one of the greatest possible urgency.

The CHAIRMAN said it might be desirable to see the Scotch members who required educating up to this point. There were not so very many who were not, whilst some had been very nearly educated, and possibly a word or two might complete their education. (Laughter.) Seventeen members of Parliament were decidedly in favour of disestablishment. They obtained pledges from several representatives more or less distinct. These were Paisley, Inverness Burghs, Edinburgh (second seat), Northern Burghs, Clackmannan and Kinross, and Perth. Thirteen would vote with their party in the event of its becoming a party question; three were decidedly opposed to disestablishment, and one of these was Sir Robert Anstruther, whose place would certainly have to be occupied by one who thought differently. So that out of the forty members of Parliament they had thirty-seven in favour of disestablishment. Certainly twenty of them were not prepared to go in for it at once, but still they had thirty-seven in its favour, and it was upon these thirty-seven they must put the pressure. (Applause.)

After brief remarks from Mr. FRANCIS (Paisley), Mr. FLINT (Ayr), and Mr. DUNCAN MCLAREN, jun., all of whom spoke for the resolution,

Dr. MARSHALL, of Cupar Angus, said the Dissenters must unite, and must say that they could have nothing to do with returning any man who was not in favour of religious equality; but he thought they must wait a little for a bill.

Councillor JOHNSTONE, of Dumfries, spoke heartily in favour of action.

Dr. JOHN KEE submitted that it was absolutely necessary they should give this question greater prominence than ever. They could not alter their position, because the position of equality was an absolute principle that they could not modify. As to the policy of the matter, that should be left pretty much to the constituencies, and to the opinions that prevail in the particular constituency. Where their friends were convinced that they were in a minority, then it would not be wise to press the thing so absolutely, but where they felt they were in the majority, they should certainly insist that they were not to give way. There was a consideration which weighed a good deal with them. If there was one thing more than another that had brought about the domination of the Beaconsfield Cabinet, it was the question of Church establishments. (Hear, hear.) It was the Established Churches—a huge monopoly in the midst of the country—who, by the natural force of the gravitation of interest, supported such a Government with all their power, and they must make it plain that they did not expect really liberal or constitutional government till these institutions were out of the way. (Applause.)

The CHAIRMAN at this stage announced an apology for absence from Mr. Dick Peddie.

Mr. JAMES STEWART offered a few remarks, in which he raised the question as to what advice they should give a constituency whose sitting member, though otherwise a good Liberal member, was not a disestablishment man? (A Voice: "Put him out.")

Mr. GEORGE PEARSON suggested that they should appoint a small committee, or leave it in the hands of the existing committee, to consider whether they should not have another and a large conference, say during the sittings of the Free Assembly.

Dr. ANDERSON, Milnathort, in regard to a suggestion to the personal reference in the resolution to Mr. Adam, said the right hon. gentleman's recent utterances were quite in harmony with the views he had enunciated for years, and he wished, with Mr. Clark, that the reference should be deleted.

Some conversation followed upon this question, but the suggestion was not pressed, and the resolution was unanimously adopted.

It was remitted to the committee to consider as to holding another conference. A vote of thanks

was accorded to the chairman, who, in reply, said those present represented all parts of Scotland, and he was sure they would return to their different places, carrying with them the recommendations and suggestions they had heard, and that principle with prudence would be their guide. (Applause.)

MR. ADAM AND SCOTCH DISESTABLISHMENT.

In view of the different constructions which have been put upon the recent speeches of Mr. Adam, the Gladstone Club, Glasgow, addressed to him the following letter for the purpose of obtaining definite information:—

Gladstone Club, Glasgow, May 1, 1879.

Sir,—Your recent speeches, delivered in Fifeshire and Devonport, have given occasion for some difference of interpretation. An opinion has gone abroad that the position there taken up in reference to the place of the disestablishment question in the Liberal programme is opposed to that announced by Lord Hartington in his speech delivered in Edinburgh last year. It has been inferred that you consider the discussion on disestablishment, so far as regards the ensuing general election, as closed, and that so far as the Liberal party is at present concerned, the question is removed from the sphere of practical politics. As this would amount to a virtual retrocession from the declaration of Lord Hartington, we beg, on behalf of the Gladstone Club, to ask whether this is the construction which you wish to be placed upon your words.—We are, &c.,
(Signed) A. C. MACKENZIE, President.
GEO. A. MITCHELL, Secretary.

Mr. Adam replied as follows:—

London, May 5, 1879.

My Dear Sir,—I send you a copy of my speech at Cupar, which, in my opinion, shows quite distinctly that there has been and is no change whatever either on the part of the Liberal leaders or myself with regard to the question of disestablishment. I have never varied in the line I have taken on this question, and have always advised the Liberals not to press it on. My own opinion on the question I have also stated quite openly.—Yours, &c.,
(Signed) W. P. ADAM.

CONGREGATIONAL UNION OF ENGLAND AND WALES.

The meetings of the Congregational Union were commenced on Monday evening, when the business meeting was held at the Memorial Hall. Tea and coffee were served in the library previous to the meeting in the large hall. There was a large attendance of ministers and delegates. The Rev. W. Cuthbertson, B.A., the chairman for the year, presided, and on the platform were Drs. R. W. Dale, J. H. Wilson, and Morton Brown, the Revs. R. Bruce, I. V. Mummery, W. Jubb, A. Hannay, &c.

A hymn having been sung, prayer was offered by the Rev. Dr. Morton Brown, of Cheltenham.

THE NEW CHAIRMAN.

The Rev. W. CUTHBERTSON, who was received with cheers, said: Your kindly welcome increases the debt of gratitude I owe for the honour you put upon me in calling me to this chair. I see by the agenda before me that our meeting to-night has a considerable amount of business before it, and therefore my sentences will be very few. But as this is the first public opportunity I have had of expressing my deep sense of your kindness to me, I want to say that, though this position is not without its burdens, there is one thing in it which casts a shadow upon all its light and beauty—it is in the public address which the chairman has to deliver. But let me say that with a true heart I thank you for placing me in the chair as your president. (Cheers.)

THE CHAIRMAN FOR 1880.

On the motion of the Rev. A. HANNAY, scrutineers were appointed for the ballot. Mr. Hannay also announced that the Rev. Samuel Newth, Principal of New College, had been nominated by a number of gentlemen as chairman of the Union for 1880, and on the motion being put to the meeting it was unanimously agreed to.

The Rev. Dr. NEWTH in responding to several calls said: If the chairman with his long experience of public meetings has to confess that he feels your honour to be a burden, much more must I own to a similar feeling. I do most profoundly feel the honour you have put upon me, and esteem this expression of your confidence. I do wish your choice had fallen upon someone else, as I have a deep feeling that I am better fitted to serve you and the churches in other ways. I dare not, however, set up my judgment against that of others, and I can only say that I will try to do my best and ask you to excuse the rest. (Cheers.)

THE REPORT FOR THE PAST YEAR.

The Rev. A. HANNAY then read the report, which commenced by reference to the carrying out of the instructions of the assembly in various matters. First, as to the proposed reforms in their college system. The special committee which had elected Henry Spicer, Esq., as chairman and the Rev. A. Mackennal, B.A., as secretary, had appointed a sub-committee, who had met at the end of March and adopted an *ad interim* report as follows:—

1. That with the view of securing a higher professional training for our ministerial students, the committee thinks it advisable that the curriculum of arts

be completely separated from the theological curriculum.

2. That in the opinion of this committee it is desirable that, as soon as possible, our colleges should confine themselves to their special function as places of theological learning.

3. That the committee recommends that, under due supervision, use be made by our students of University College, Owens College, and the Yorkshire College, and, in cases in which it may be desirable, of Oxford or Cambridge, or one of the Scottish Universities.

4. That it is desirable that an increasing number of the candidates for the ministry be from those who have graduated at one of our English or Scottish Universities; but for the benefit of men unable to avail themselves of the national universities or colleges, this committee recognises the need of the temporary continuance of literary instruction in some of our colleges.

5. That this committee recommends the further elevation of the standard of examination for entrance to our colleges; and suggests that, as long as necessary, special provision be made for the preliminary training of men unable to pass it, so as to separate their instruction from ordinary college work.

6. That in order to secure greater efficiency in theological teaching, it is advisable that fewer subjects be assigned to each theological professor; and that, while, in the opinion of the committee, the confederation of the colleges into two or three groups is the best way of securing this and other desirable ends, it recommends that for the present the colleges should co-operate in one of the two following ways: the professors either conducting classes in other colleges than their own, or receiving students from other colleges into their classes.

The general committee recommended that the special committee should be appointed to complete these inquiries and report. As 1881 will be the jubilee of the Union, the general purposes committee, to whom the matter had been referred, had recommended that instead of the Congregational Lecture, they should for that year have a series of twelve lectures in London, mainly historical, to be afterwards published as the eighth volume of the Union Series; that during 1881-2 ministers should be invited to preach on subjects touching the organisation and laws of the Church of Christ; that leaflets should be issued, containing succinct statements of truth on points contained in the Congregational Scheme of Church Government; and that special efforts be made during the year to call forth contributions from the churches for some denominational purpose or purposes, such purpose or purposes to be agreed upon and announced nearer the time of the celebration. The following syllabus has been prepared relative to the proposed lectures:—(1) Independents before the Commonwealth, the Rev. R. W. Dale; (2) Archbishop Laud and the Puritans, Rev. H. Allon, D.D.; (3) The Westminster Assembly, Rev. J. Stoughton, D.D.; (4) The Commonwealth Period, Rev. E. R. Conder, M.A.; (5) The Policy of the Restoration, Rev. J. Kennedy, D.D.; (6) Schemes of Comprehension (Burnet), Rev. S. Pearson, M.A.; (7) Struggle for Civil Liberty in the Georgian Era—Abolition of Test and Corporation Acts, Rev. J. B. Brown, B.A.; (8) Religious Revival in the Georgian Era and its Effect on the Development of the Free Church Principle, Rev. A. Raleigh, D.D.; (9) Tractarianism and Congregationalism, Rev. E. Mellor, D.D.; (10) Broad Church Doctrine and Congregationalism, Rev. E. White; (11) The Struggle for Religious Equality, Rev. J. G. Rogers, B.A.; (12) The Free Churches in America and the British Colonies, Rev. Wm. Cuthbertson, B.A. It has been further resolved that a brief popular history of the Union shall be prepared and published, and that arrangements shall be made for popular lectures in addition to those included in the Congregational Union series. No steps had been as yet taken for convening a conference at an early date on matters connected with the religious state of England, and the co-operation of those churches for the promotion of faith and godliness among the people. The matter might involve delicate and protracted negotiations. But a well-known member of the Congregational body, who is respected and honoured in all the churches, has, at the instance of the committee, agreed to invite a few of the eminent members, ministerial and non-ministerial, of the several non-established Evangelical Churches to a private preliminary meeting, and it is hoped that at the autumnal meeting it will be possible to report considerable progress towards the end aimed at. In accordance with the decision of the last autumnal meeting, the committee had instructed the secretary to prepare a brief tract containing suggestions to guide vacant churches in looking for a minister; and, in the second place, to submit a resolution to the assembly recommending the several county associations to appoint a confidential committee with which vacant churches and unsettled pastors may correspond. Reference is then made to the resolution published by the committee in condemnation of the Afghan war, and the petition presented to Parliament on the subject, and "the committee regards the foreign policy of the Government, and to some extent the usual temper of the people in relation to it, with much anxiety, as boding peril not only to the churches but to the whole interests and order of civil society." It has, therefore, prepared a resolution for the assembly on the subject. A resolution relative to the death of the Princess Alice had also been adopted. It was further reported that the committee of Milton Mount College had cordially accepted the offer for the appointment of an independent committee by the Union Committee "to investigate the various points that have been raised in connection with the

management, with the view of securing that general confidence of the churches which is essential to its efficient support." That committee was now constituted, the Rev. J. G. Rogers being the convener. Its other members are—the Rev. Dr. H. Allon, the Rev. R. M. Davies, Ziba Armitage, Esq. (Warrington), J. A. Morriss, Esq. (Plymouth), J. J. Colman, Esq., M.P. (Norwich), E. Goddard, Esq., J.P. (Ipswich), J. Walker, Esq. (London), H. S. Leonard, Esq. (London), and Joseph Craven, Esq. (Thornton). It would be proposed to the assembly that there should be a slight alteration in the rules as to membership, which would place the churches in London in the same position in regard to eligibility for connection with the Union as the churches in other parts of the country. In respect to the ministerial lists in the "Year Book," the report says:—

The lists officially furnished by the London Congregational Union were therefore received for the "Year Book of 1879," and will be received for subsequent years in the same way as the lists from the county associations. A various and, at some points, painful experience has shown the necessity of great care in preparing the lists, whether of churches or of ministers, and the committee feel that the two principles by which they are guided, and to which they have instructed their editor in all cases to adhere, cannot be too widely known or too often repeated—namely, first, that the lists of every successive year shall be new lists; and, secondly, that no names shall be inserted except such as are officially furnished by the secretaries of county associations or unions, including the London Congregational Union. The committee feels that there is no safe course between this method and the total suppression of the lists.

By the death of the Rev. R. Ashton, the editorship has devolved upon the secretary. He has also been requested by the council to act for a year as honorary secretary of the Church Aid Society, and his labours will be much lightened by the nomination of a well-qualified secretary. After a reference to the last autumnal meeting at Liverpool, it is stated that the autumnal meeting this year will be held at Cardiff. Allusion is also made to the remarkable exhibition of fraternal feeling and fellowship in the autumn between the members of the Union and their fellow Congregationalists of the Baptist Union, which shows "that, however desirable it may be, as denominational organisations are at present ordered, that the two sections of Congregationalists should remain denominational apart, it is not primary, but secondary questions that divide them." The same catholic spirit was manifest in respect to other religious communions at the Liverpool meeting. The hymn-book continued to have a large sale. The number of copies sold in 1877 was 132,100, in 1878 135,150, being a difference in favour of last year of 3,050. A new Sunday-school hymn-book is being compiled, the Rev. G. S. Barrett, B.A., having, at the request of the committee, undertaken the editorship. The Congregational Lecture for 1879 will be delivered towards the close of the year by the Rev. J. G. Rogers. His subject will be "Church Systems in England in the Nineteenth Century." A series of tracts is also in preparation. The committee had made a grant of 1,000*l.* to the Church Aid Society, and of 500*l.* to the trustees of the Memorial Hall in relief of the yet undischarged debt on that building. That debt is now reduced to 2,000*l.*—the total expenditure having been 76,000*l.*—and the trustees hope that the entire liability will be removed in another year. The gross income of the hall is nearly 2,000*l.*, but the outlay is very large. The library consists of some 10,000 volumes of Nonconformist literature, and it is reported "that the ends for which the building was erected are being fully answered, and that not only have the principal societies connected with the denomination found accommodation under its roof on favourable terms, but numberless meetings of all descriptions, more or less connected with the Nonconformist body, are held in the hall and library, which constitute this the rallying-point of all that is ablest and best in Congregational religious life." The report concludes with a fitting reference to the chief losses of the year, the Revs. W. Braden, Samuel Martin, and R. Ashton, and Messrs. George Hadfield and John Crossley.

The financial statement showed that there had been a profit on the publications during the year of 1,662*l.*, and that the annual subscriptions (795*l.*) had been the largest ever received.

The Rev. R. BRUCE (Huddersfield) moved a resolution adopting the report and thanking the committee and officers. They had listened, he said, to a very long and a very interesting report, but he did not know how it could have been less long or less interesting. It was quite right that so much should be said about their colleges, which lay at the root of their work. They were justly proud of the men who were at the head of their colleges, and there were in the south and in the north many prospective chairmen connected with their colleges. With regard to the Jubilee, he rejoiced to hear that they were to have lectures. It was not necessary that they should be as antagonistic as in the bicentenary year; but he hoped they would be profitable for reproof and correction of their enemies, and especially for instruction in the history and principles of their denomination. Allusion had been made in the report to politics, and he thought they would agree with him that what had been said in regard to the Afghan war might be equally said of the war now being carried on in South Africa. It was high time that the eyes of a Government which had been wandering to the ends of the earth should look at things nearer their own door; that they should recall their energies from fighting barbarians

abroad, and try to revive our drooping trade and relieve our overtaxed people, and remove those social grievances and inequalities which prevailed at home. He could not help feeling that foreign policy had been used to blind their eyes to flagrant abuses at their own doors. He was quite at one with Messrs. Dale and Rogers, who were seeking to disestablish and disendow the Established Church, and make it what they themselves were, free. But whilst they were doing that, let them not neglect their home duty to establish upon a firm basis their own churches. He would not refer to points in dispute, such as Milton Mount College and the "Year-Book." He hoped they had heard the last of them, and that Milton Mount College would become an institution which would command the universal support of all their ministers and laymen. With regard to membership and removal of names, to provoke discussion would now be inopportune. The allusions in the report to their departed friends were, he thought, extremely appropriate and well deserved. He knew Mr. Braden well, and had looked forward to his career with great hope and expectation; and with regard to their friend Mr. Crossley, they never had in Yorkshire any public funeral of any public man which would bear comparison with that in the numbers present and the amount of feeling and love shown to his memory on that occasion. It was not only a testimony to his life and Christian character, but testimony to the goodness of human nature naturally, that when wealth was taken from him there was all that respect and love remaining in each heart. They would be soon entering upon another fifty years, and he appealed to them whether they might not augur from the past greater success in the future. He did not think they were going to break up into two or three unions or dissolve. He hoped the spirit of their Union was that, trusting in God and in one another, they could exclaim—"I shall not die, but live and declare the truth and glory of God." (Cheers.)

Mr. Alderman MANTON (Birmingham) said he thought that there was every reason for a cordial reception of the report, which contained the record of much good work well done, and they were indebted to the genius of their secretary for much of it. He hoped that all connected with that Union would try to supply the materials for a still better report in the future.

The resolution was adopted unanimously.

Mr. GODDARD moved a resolution appointing the treasurer and officers.

The Rev. DR. KENNEDY said he had especial satisfaction in seconding the resolution, because during the next year their honoured secretary would be relieved of a portion of the burden he had had to bear. (Hear, hear.) His work in connection with the Union and Church Aid Society was something more than mortal flesh could stand, and he was glad they would be able to relieve him of some of that labour. Of his efficiency in his own work it would be presumptuous for him to say anything. They were all indebted to him for his zeal and unexampled devotion of heart and soul to the service of the Union. (Cheers.)

THE LONDON CONGREGATIONAL UNION.

The resolution was adopted, and the Rev. A. HANNAY moved the following resolution, which he explained was simply to make it quite clear that the rule included the London Congregational Union. That Union, not being a county one, was only a ministerial club, but it was the only body they had in London; and in making that change, he asked them to notice that they were not contracting the door of entrance into the Union, but throwing it open wider:—

1. That in Rule 9 A (a) after the word "meets" the following words be inserted:—"Or with the London Congregational Union," and after the word "Association," the words "or Union."

2. That the Rule 9 A (b) be cancelled.

The Rev. G. S. INGRAM seconded the resolution, which was adopted.

The Rev. A. HANNAY proposed the election of several ministers as honorary members of the Union, which was agreed to, and the proceedings were closed with prayer and the benediction by the Rev. Professor Newth.

The public Assembly met yesterday morning at half-past nine in Christ Church, Westminster, under the presidency of the Rev. W. Cuthbertson, B.A., the Chairman of the Union. The spacious building was well filled, and among others present were Mr. H. Richard, M.P., the Rev. A. Hannay (secretary), the Rev. J. G. Rogers, the Rev. Dr. Allon, the Rev. Dr. Raleigh, Dr. R. W. Dale, the Rev. Baldwin Brown, Mr. H. Spicer, Mr. H. Lee (Manchester), the Rev. W. Crosbie, the Rev. A. H. Byles, the Rev. William Statham, the Rev. J. R. Thomson, the Rev. Dr. Mellor (Halifax), the Rev. P. Colborne, the Rev. Dr. Clemance, the Rev. E. White, &c. The proceedings commenced with a short devotional service.

THE CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESS.

The CHAIRMAN then delivered his inaugural address, the subject being "Organised Independence." In a few introductory remarks he spoke of his position there as the chiefest public honour of his life and of the consciousness of the confidence and kindness of his brethren as being too keen to allow of his declining the distinction. To

many it would be a disappointment if this 1879 should not be a memorable year in the history of English Congregationalism. After conferences and discussions familiar to them all, they had started in practical work their Church Aid and Home Missionary Society. It might seem discouraging that it had been commenced in a time of national depression, but hereafter they could safely trust to progress, and if there were truth in Ruskin's teaching that the noblest building made with hands for spiritual ends, must lack the perfection of grace and beauty unless light from the lamp of sacrifice had shone upon it, surely they might emphasise the truth when they spoke of a spiritual building. But he was far from implying that their first year's action had been a failure. It was no bad beginning that at a time of almost unexampled distress 29,400*l.* had been placed in the treasury. Then their scheme had received the general assent of the churches, as was shown by the fact that thirty-five out of thirty-eight county unions had entered the confederation after long and careful deliberation. But he did not desire to conceal that there were strong voices to challenge their work, whose objection was not simply to the Church Aid Society, but to the spirit which created it. He therefore desired to give expression to views on the subject which he had cherished for years, while allowing the weight and importance of the views of those who differed from him. Recognising the existence of two schools of thought on this question in their Union, it might be useful to try first to see how far they agreed and where and why they eventually part company. They were one in the maintenance of the perfect independency of each church from all ecclesiastical legislative control and its constitutional completeness within its own membership, and they held as sacred the Scriptural law of brotherly equality in the church, with its consequent individual rights. These had helped to keep them true to their Evangelical belief, from which there had been no general apostasy. This was not in spite of individual freedom but because of it. Their emblem was the mighty ocean which is pure only because never still. Almost of equal importance, they fostered a high ideal of the Christian life. Reading the grand roll of names which adorned their history, it was not so much their culture, their breadth of mind, nor even the genius of the lofty few which struck the mind, as the saintliness of soul—the calm and still sublimity of holiness—which sang in their psalms, or beautified their sufferings, or shone in the living temple of which they preached. Nor could it be otherwise with men whose life standard was the absolute essence of things which lived in the sight of the Eternal and the Infinite. Further, they could together proclaim that neither man nor church liveth to himself or itself alone. It was no mere feeling of delight in brotherly fellowship or in pleasant change from lonely work which brought forth the idea of county unions. The felt need of concerted action to do their share of Christ's work, overwhelmed theoretical fears and devised these county relations. Indeed, their Congregational Union, which had so grown in numbers and in interest, sprung from the heart's desire of the Brotherhood for enlarged and effective work. What distrust there still was did not arise from their Union as offering an opportunity for conference or as a society using the best means at its command for enlightening the churches on the vital questions of the time, but as an organised body gradually accumulating power which might be used for purposes dangerous to their freedom. The rise of the Church Aid Society had brought them face to face with two distinct policies, and he himself desired to speak in favour of the necessity of a fuller organisation for Christian work along their present lines, and to urge some considerations which should make them glory in the spirit that had given them their confederated work. The history of modern Independency was no ignoble one:—

What it has done for the salvation of souls only He who knows all could tell. But as we march down the centuries, statesmen and historians tell us that though not a State Church few churches have been a greater blessing to the State. They tell us that wherever we find free lips, a free press and free worship, the Puritan may largely claim them as his own. They tell us that in one deadly battle for the nation's liberty Independents won the fight. They tell us—in the slave's freedom, the Catholic's emancipation, the child's education, we played no inferior part. They tell us that in obtaining political reform, municipal government, and freedom of trade, the nation owes us no small thanks; and they tell us that on great questions of foreign policy our voice has ever been for righteousness and mercy. Take the influence of the two sections of Congregationalism out of the life of England since the days of Cromwell and Milton, and from the workhouse to the throne you would find a changed nation. What we thus speak of and may fitly call our national work has, for the most part, been wrought in connection with and by the help of the national political Liberal party. Like this party, in its loftier mood, loving noble ends, we gave them of our best, and without boasting we say, with other Nonconforming communions, that but for the strength we brought them the splendid work of Liberalism could not have been done.

Their strength lay chiefly among the middle class, and some who hated them said that that strength had gone. They had been told that the centre of gravity in English politics had changed. He thought there was much exaggeration in that assertion, as he hoped would be proved in the coming election. But there was sufficient truth in it to make them seriously ponder the cause that they might find the remedy. It was not merely

the result of the partisan policy of the author of the last Reform Bill, but one of the indications that they had entered into a new era.

What De Tocqueville saw in vision some fifty years ago, is incarnating into fact, and the sovereignty of the people is conquering Europe. Undoubtedly, for the moment, this has weakened our political position, but only so long as we fail to see the way to meet the change. More even than this. In opposition to *a priori* judgments the victory of Democracy has opened a splendid and fruitful field for the labours of the great historic churches of this as of other lands. The sacerdotal section of the Anglican Church and the Roman Catholic Church — themselves feeling the breath of this spirit — are turning to the people. With their complete organisation, their great wealth, and the great ability at their command, they are straining every nerve to draw the masses within their folds. What would their success promise for the future of England? Priestcraft in power and sacramentarian dogmas accepted, this free Commonwealth would cease to be the nation of our love. I do not imply that we alone can successfully combat these opposing forces and carry our country forward upon the rugged path of freedom. But I feel certain that all who love liberty and manhood would grieve to see us weak in such a supreme hour. Already I have shown I do not depreciate the "days of old," that I do not undervalue the great deeds our fathers wrought. Nor do I say that our churches, working in comparative isolation, would accomplish little in this line, but I do say the full power and wisdom of a united denomination is needed to do for our age what we boast our fathers did in theirs. Without united and organised action I do not see how it is possible for us, in this new and solemn time, faithfully to fulfil our national duties. But if we, relying upon the abiding presence of the Spirit who is light and truth, meeting in prayerful conference, devise plans of work which promise to utilise in concentrated power every gift and grace in our churches, and of which, in intention at least as God-fearing men, we can say, "It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us" — then I venture to predict the glory of the latter time will exceed the glory of the former.

Their ecclesiastical principles ran along the line of present tendency, and it would be strange if the Church, which for the last three centuries had been in the van in every contest for the enfranchisement and enrichment of mind and life, should fail to find a welcome and a home in the heart of dear old England in the hour when, to quote the words of John Bright, "The mother of free nations shall herself be free." But it was not true, as had been said, that their only or chief bond of union was the ecclesiastical one. They were a Christian communion by their oneness in the faith of Christ Jesus their Lord, and their strongest desire was to preach His Gospel to every creature. There were four distinct spheres which made their Unions and Church Aid Society absolute necessities. Taking first the large centres of population, London was an extreme illustration:—

Apart from special obstructions the vastness of the city is a bewilderment and difficulty. Where Christian activity is most needed — how to find sites for sanctuaries and how to pay for them when found, where land is so scarce and so dear. Then there are the different classes in a society so vast, needing varied kinds of ministration — the shifting of residence and the rapid growth of new suburbs, and above all, in this line of our thought, the number of workers still needed to come near meeting the spiritual wants of more than four million people. Thinking only of our proportion of the work in face of these difficulties, does not common sense urge organised action? Then try and picture the moral condition of tens of thousands here. Classes, not small in number, living by sin — lives shattered and homes wrecked by the drink fiend — the number of gambling hells and the alarming growth of betting — the coarse animalism of so many — the character of popular pleasures and the revelations of our courts of bankruptcy. From the awful vision one turns away sick at heart asking, almost without faith, "Can these dry bones live?"

Then, in respect to the spiritual condition of the metropolis, there would be found hard godlessness, utter indifference to things divine, proclaimed unbelief, religious superstition rampant among the upper classes, and agnosticism or some form of scepticism prevalent amongst their literary leaders. There was a brighter side of the picture, and they could tell of life in Christ and work for Him beyond all praise. Still they were informed by the London Union that all the churches of the metropolis made provision for only 31 per cent. of the population, and probably one-third of that was not used. The Congregationalists had in the metropolis 245 places of worship, that being 12.28 per cent. of the total accommodation provided, and close upon four per cent. in relation to the whole population. Though they were thankful for that, the appalling fact remained that millions of the population were still untouched. How should they take a fair share in this great enterprise? Recognise no common responsibility, nor attempt to gain from united experience and knowledge a wide view of the field of labour, nor form a common purse? Or putting their whole heart and soul into the London Union and Church Aid Society, combine their every gift and grace in "the battle of the Lord against the mighty"? The same remarks would apply with wide variations to our large towns, and also to Oxford and Cambridge, the vital centres of the nation's life. Had they not a mission to those seats of learning? He thought it was their duty as Independents collectively to devise and to maintain in all strength some agency of special adaptation, and through which the loftiest thought, the most perfect culture, the ripest experience, and the highest life of the denomination, to send their message to the educated youth of England. He would now turn to their position and work in country districts, where so many changes had taken place. Once

country Congregationalism was largely their glory:—

But now the manufacturing and mining districts, the trade centres, and the colonies have not only prevented the natural progress of the agricultural counties, but they have made and keep them weak by their drain upon the population. This mighty influence has been felt in full force by our churches. From this and other causes, local and for the time, there are counties in which, if we are to live with a fair measure of strength and act aggressively upon rural ignorance, rural brutalism, and rural vice, brotherly help must come from those that are without. We have said that in the past country churches were our boast. Are we to say that now they are our shame? In all calmness of speech I for one say that if asked to point out the finest illustration of the spirit of Independence I would point to our country churches and their work rather than to higher places in the field. There, in obscurity, in poverty, few in number, living in a social and political atmosphere heavy with arrogant scorn and dislike, a work is done for the purity of home life, for the sacred cause of liberty, for political and trade righteousness, and for personal godliness, which is truly the sweetening branch cast into muddy waters making them bright and pure.

Their late revered friend Thomas Binney had pitifully declared "that we have nothing to gain by multiplying little churches and little men." That sentence had cut deeply. If the word "little" meant that they were to keep the incompetent from the ministry, it was profoundly true and wise. But if, in its application to ministers, it was to be synonymous with humbleness of position or smallness of sphere, then far more than himself would judge it neither wise nor true.

Few more unheroic men than the common British soldier as you see him in his barrack home, but in that terrible night at Rorke's Drift, when the bravest might have quailed, even the drummer boy was a hero. Measured by a high standard of culture and ministerial power, many a village pastor would fall short. But he is not a little man who, among a few people, can plod on in daily Christian work, can bear the lot of the poor, can face a social ostracism that touches not him self alone, but wife and children too, can live and work with but small opportunity for intellectual converse, can for the Master's sake hold fast to a sphere where the advancement of his family is impossible, who preaches the Gospel with real delight and true feeling though he may lack greatly both of natural and trained power. The average country minister need not come before us bringing in his hand an *apologia pro vita sua*, but might even in this great gathering present a modest challenge for brotherly regard.

But the question was, were these men and churches worthy of their sympathy and aid? He was certain the other free churches labouring by their side would lament as a calamity the slightest weakening of their power in the villages and small towns of the counties. He did not suppose that were outside help withheld these churches would pass away. The spirit of Christian sacrifice was too strong in them to permit that. But they could not allow the experiment to be continued, and so they brought into operation a national denominational movement, which they believed to be in perfect harmony with their church freedom, and which they hoped would gradually improve both ministerial position and the quality and extent of their work. The speaker went on to refer to the spiritual needs of our colonies, to the Canadas and Australias in particular, where men of our own blood were laying the foundations of powerful nations. They had, with more or less united action, always been doing something on behalf of those lands, and the future would show that no seed sown in this century by the hands of English Congregationalists would yield a larger harvest than that scattered in the Colonial field. What better work could they now do in foreign missions than fill Australia with Christian life by the concerted action of their churches through the agency of the Colonial Missionary Society? The work already done by Independents in the Australian colonies had been a great work, especially in South Australia, the only colony which ever existed that had kept itself free from the entanglements of State aid in support of religion, and a colony in which Thomas Binney took an exceptional interest. Their central society was well fitted to work a scheme in organised co-operation with the Australian churches, and if done it would be a new honour to its name. If they had a mission to the Colonies at all, one chief way of fulfilling it was by sending Christian laymen to their help full of earnestness and strength — men like the lamented John Crossley and George Hadfield, who would do in the colonies the splendid work which these pure and noble Christians had effected in the old country. Mr. Cuthbertson went on to glance at the new and widespread wants of the English-speaking population of Wales, to supply which something was being done, and the wide field for their mission opened in Ireland, urging that the little band representing them who laboured in that land of spiritual shadow should not be left to feel themselves strangers, but be regarded as an integral and valued portion of British Independence. While preparing his address and thinking of the grandeur of Christian work, the dimming mists called up by the spirit of the last two years seemed to suggest the dream and the dreamer.

From the bosom of England came haughty assertion of national power, overbearing claims of right were made, and selfish interests were shouted forth as if a new Gospel had been found; the right of simplest justice to a heathen people was scornfully denied, and men trained in the law argued that with such, might was the right; passionate cries for war filled the air, and the Sermon on the Mount seemed forgotten, and worst of all these cries prevailed, and England, through her Cabinet, conceived and in her Parliament endorsed the policy of two aggressive wars. One mused in sad-

ness and the hope of England for Christ sometimes passed into the gloom, as we wonderingly asked, Is this then the outcome of so many centuries of Christian teaching? How can these things be, after all the ages of Christian toil and sacrifice? Is the fruit of all our past, this conception of England's future greatness — vastness of territory, imperial position, and material wealth?

For answer we lift our face to the blue heavens, and there we learn neither to let go our Christian faith nor release our Christian efforts. In that light we read again the brighter pages of our country's story and see in them the nobler elements of the nation's life. We look around and see the madness of the hour fast dying, and sober Christian opinion rising into power and turning from the human voices to the Book in which He speaks, with new faith we paint a future when a whole country shall seek the exaltation of righteousness, when the flag of England shall be beautiful on mountain wave or mountain top to all who are in bonds, and when in its heart of hearts this great people shall esteem it their very crown of glory not to be the imperial rulers of Eastern millions, but themselves the "Servants of Jesus Christ."

The speaker sat down amid loud cheers.

The Rev. A. HANNAY (the secretary) announced that the following members were proposed as the reference committee:—Dr. Raleigh, London; Bruce, Huddersfield; Charles Williams; Henry Wright, London; P. Sharman, Wellingboro'; Henry Lee, Manchester; and Goddard, Durham. A resolution appointing these gentlemen as the committee was passed.

The Rev. A. HANNAY read the names of the gentlemen who had been chosen by ballot as the committee for the ensuing year.

CHRISTIAN WORK IN ENGLAND.

The Rev. Dr. CLEMANCE then read a lengthy paper:—"On the responsibilities of the churches in regard to Christian work in England." He dealt first of all with the question of the peculiar features of English life and thought at the present time, and the relation they bore to church life and responsibility. Outside the Christian faith were materialism, agnosticism, and pantheism; while outside the pale of Christian life were indifference, luxury, formalism, speculation, recklessness, hastening to be rich, by all of which the work of the churches was chilled, even as sailors feel the chill of an iceberg from afar. Inside the Christian pale he noticed the effect of Ultramontanism, Sacerdotalism, Sacramentarianism and Erastianism; besides these was the fact of the alienation of multitudes of people from Christian worship of any kind. Among the working and poorer classes, only one in ten could in any proper sense be called religious. The London City missionary reported twenty or thirty houses situated together from which only one or two persons attended public worship. In London alone there were one million of neglectors of public worship, increasing yearly; so that unless a check was put on the decline of church going, some of their younger brethren might live to mourn the absence of two millions or more persons in London from the house of God. Proportionately to the population the Independent body was going back from year to year in the religious accommodation provided. In some of their churches, dead creeds were rigidly taught, and in others spiritual instincts and selective affinities led men to decry doctrine; while in our literature they must long to see in one quarter a holy and unabashed glorying in an Atoning Saviour, and in another less of criticism and more fervour for evangelistic enterprise. Still, he would be a very sombre Christian who could find no hopeful features in the look-out. More caution in the statements made on the side of unbelief might be desired, and even in Positivism there seemed to be a yearning after the religion of humanity that might yet find rest in the Son of Man. In Agnosticism the acknowledgment of an awful blank might be the way to lead many to feel after God. It was something, also, to see a manifestation of limits to heresy. They must gladly own, too, that the revolt of many against creeds was one method of showing a demand for life. Among Christian bodies there was a blessed oneness in the landmarks of theological thought, and in every direction a wondrous variety and strength in the redemptive forces at work. Within the Establishment there was a protest against the keys of the kingdom being in Caesar's hands, and there was in Christendom a weariness over the divisions therein, and a longing for union. They must feel also sure that many who stood aloof from any form of church-life did nevertheless believe in God, in the Book, and in Christ. Such bright gleamings would cheer them amid the gloom. But with all these allowances there remained enough to awaken their most anxious solicitude, and their hopes could only be realised through the medium of the churches, and so far as their own body was concerned, through the fidelity of their own churches. The Rev. gentleman then discussed the question of the duties pressing on their churches under the present state of things, and he elaborated the following heads into which the rest of the paper was divided, namely:—

1. Let us recognise the direct and immediate responsibility of each church to our Lord Jesus Christ.
2. We are kings unto God; let each church remember its loyalty.
3. Let each church understand its own priesthood.
4. In discharging the responsibilities of a royal priesthood, each church must be one of aggression and self-propagation.

5. Let the personal responsibility of each church member be distinctly recognised,

6. Collective action is also needed.

In conclusion, the rev. gentleman quoted some statistics to show the falling-off of attendance on religious worship in proportion to the increase of population, and drew attention to the fact that during the last thirteen years the Wesleyans had increased 32 per cent. in London, the Baptists 31 per cent., the Presbyterians 12 per cent., Episcopalian 13 per cent., Roman Catholics 28 per cent., while the Independents had increased only 5 per cent. And he pointed out that the remedy would be to make the Church Aid Society a mighty centre for arousing evangelical zeal, and asked why the income of that society could not be made such as to enable it at once to plant twenty new men in new districts in London, guaranteeing their support while they were forming new congregations. He believed that this, superadded to the self-propagation of every self-sustaining church in London, would soon change the face of things and turn their present mourning into gladness.

The Rev. J. RADFORD THOMSON, M.A., then moved:—

That the assembly, considering the habitual neglect of public worship on the part of a large portion of the English people, as shown by the limited accommodation provided for such worship in most of the large centres of population and by the partial use which is made of that accommodation; and considering the evidences of widespread practical irreligion which appear in the habits and character of all classes of English society, is impressed with a sense of the duty which rests on the Congregational, in common with other Churches, to put forth new and more self-denying efforts to command the Gospel to the people, and urges the churches to render vigorous and liberal support to the Church Aid and Home Missionary Society, that it may have at its disposal the means of invigorating and extending all Congregational home missionary agencies.

He said that the resolution and the papers that had been read all made the admission that there was at the present time a general neglect of public worship, especially among the working classes. This had been proved, indeed, long ago by the census of 1851, and by the recent statistics published in the *Nonconformist*, and which, though challenged, have never been disproved. Again, it was shown to be the case by the two books published by Mr. Mabbs, giving an account of the condition of the counties of Derby and Kent, and by the statistics that had been collected by Mr. Mearns, secretary of the London Congregational Union. It was clear the religious bodies had not kept pace with the growth of the population, especially in the large towns. In fact, that the church accommodation already provided was not half used showed that multitudes of people remained outside the Christian denominations. Nevertheless, they must not conclude that all who absented themselves from public worship were not Christians. They were not to take a narrow and sceptical view of religion. Possibly the public religious teaching of the country required more variety and greater adaptation to the wants of the time, for notwithstanding the schemes of Christian benevolence and evangelisation and self-sacrifice that had been hitherto employed, the masses of the people were growing up as strangers to spiritual life. He was not, however, disposed to take an alarmist view of the question, and therefore he turned with pleasure to the resolution which had fallen to his lot to propose. As Englishmen they believed that a great work had been entrusted to them, which could only be done by being more penetrated than ever by the principles of their holy faith. In order to give light, they must also receive light, and then they would be able to let their light shine abroad. The Gospel of Christ was the remedy they must employ, and there must be no faltering or hesitation in the matter. They must go on with it in the full feeling that it was not their own work, but God's work, and that He would give them strength for its fulfilment. They must regard their churches as the means, not only of promoting the spiritual good of their members, but as missions for the publication of Christianity throughout the world. While their mission was to all classes, it was peculiarly one to the educated, the thoughtful, and the leaders of public opinion. They were, he thought, pledged at the present time to enter upon a new departure. While he would not diminish their efforts amongst the rural populations, still their great labour was amongst the great centres of population. They should prepare themselves for greater efforts than ever in this direction; and they might do so by entering heartily into the work of the Congregational Church Aid and Missionary Society, and by such measures as these they would ultimately make England the lasting home of truth and virtue, liberty and peace.

The Rev. P. COLBORNE seconded the resolution, which, he took it, was intended to rekindle the motive-powers in their churches. He believed this was the right line to adopt, and there were already in view sources of encouragement to proceed with the work. He was glad to see that at some of the recent county meetings greater interest was being taken in the Church Aid Society. In one county the workers in the missionary field preferred that a surplus sum of about 200£ should be spent in extending the field of operation rather than in increasing their own salaries. (Hear, hear.) With such an example of self-sacrifice they need not fear the result. He was glad to observe that some churches which had hitherto taken little interest

in home missionary work were warming to it; and one object of the resolution he believed was to prevent those who had really started in the work becoming tired of it. Like a man who began to exercise himself in walking, they would discover that after getting over certain fatiguing distances they would cease to feel the same fatigue afterwards, and would find the work could be easily done; and when that time arrived in their history they would find that their labours had very much changed the condition of things in England from what they were at the present time. Some things had been said lately about little churches and little men—some of them wise, some otherwise. (Laughter and applause.) In his opinion they wanted a great many more little men—(Hear, hear)—to do the work which small rivers did for great ones, and which the articulations of the various limbs did for the human system. If they all co-operated together in this way in support of the home missionary work, it would develop and extend with a new vigour, and they would have hereafter to rejoice at the great blessings that had been secured through its agency and exertions. (Applause.)

The Rev. J. F. V. TINLING had some doubts as to the precise meaning of the resolution. If it was meant that the new agency was to swallow up all the others, then he should protest against it; but believing that that was not intended, but that there was still room left for other agencies besides the Church Aid Society, he ventured to suggest that one particular agency which had not yet been recognised ought to be recognised. He referred to the association for carrying on missions in the churches, of which 500 Congregational ministers had signified their approval, and which had already been one year at work, conducting 100 missions, and gathering into the churches 500, or more probably 1,000, souls during that period. He asked whether such an enterprise should be ignored amongst them in public assembly. Many ministers who had not yet put their hand to the work sympathised with it. It was work of that kind that made John Wesley and Whitfield memorable; and if the plan was believed in in their day it ought to be believed in and acknowledged now. He heartily supported the resolution.

The Rev. H. T. ROJOHNS desired to express in that assembly the sentiments of the Rev. Edward White, who though present was prevented by the state of his voice from speaking. Mr. White desired to call attention to the very effective agency now at work in the north-west of London, with the object of bringing the Gospel home to the working classes. It was not always practicable to follow the example of Mr. Spurgeon and give up one's church on certain Sunday evenings to the artisan classes; but in the north-west of London a plan had been carried out of having a certain Sunday night's special services for the artisan classes. The subjects treated upon were made popular by such titles as "The eye and its Maker," based on the text—"He that made the eye, shall He not see?" or, "The mouth and its structure; its use and its abuse"; or, "Jerusalem; a confirmation of the Old Testament by modern discovery." The preacher of course soon left the scientific for the religious part of the discourse; and so Christianity and the example of Jesus Christ were brought prominently before the working classes who attended. The addresses were given not only by ministers but by laymen; and he was told that the way in which the laymen pressed the Gospel home upon the artisans was most impressive. The church was free from one end to the other, and a feature was the employment of music. He felt, however, that the working classes would never find a permanent home in their congregations until there was a reform of their present financial system.

Mr. E. G. GOOD (Falcon-square Chapel) said the real meaning of the resolution was—"Pay your ministers better and build more chapels"; but it seemed strange to him that those who had prepared the resolution were ignorant of past history, for the same remedy had been tried for hundreds of years, and had always failed. (Dissent.) The Gospel had been proclaimed in this country for one thousand years, and yet irreligion had prevailed among all classes of the community, and so far as churches and congregations were concerned there appeared to be retrogression rather than progress. The speaker was presently interrupted by indications of dissent, and being asked by the chairman whether he was about to offer an amendment, he said he would not do so, but would vote against the resolution.

The resolution was then put and carried, with Mr. Good only dissenting.

THE FOREIGN POLICY OF THE GOVERNMENT.

The Rev. W. CROSBIE moved the following resolution:—

That the assembly, believing that the foreign policy of Her Majesty's Government, by which the country has been committed to unnecessary, and therefore criminal, wars in India and South Africa, and to burdensome and undesirable obligations in European diplomacy, is inconsistent with the spirit of justice and humanity which should prevail in the counsels of a Christian nation, and with the truthful and generous policy which in recent years has been advocated by all great English statesmen, expresses its regret and surprise that, in the face of the protest made by many of the religious and political leaders of the nation, such policy should have received the sanction of the British Parliament and of a portion of the English people, and calls upon all who are careful for the honour and stability of their country, and who are concerned that

it should not be found "fighting against God," to use every lawful means to bring about the adoption of a policy worthy of the historic name and the religious faith of England.

He observed that we called ourselves a Christian nation; that we had established the Christian religion; that we had given bishops seats in the House of Lords; that we had incorporated prayers derived from the Scriptures in Acts of Parliament; that we had associated forms of religion with the actions of the nation—yet he would ask whether, during the last two or three years, the conduct of the nation could be designated as Christian? (Applause.) The nation had violated almost every precept of the decalogue. We had coveted; we had stolen; we had borne false witness; we had taken the name of God in vain; we had killed; and we had set up and worshipped the graven image of Imperialism, and all this without a protest, except in individual cases, of the clergy of the national Church. (Cries of "Shame.") The resolution was not his own, but was that of the committee, but it coincided exactly with his own view of the foreign policy of the Government. Those who had read the Duke of Argyll's noble book on the Eastern Question would see that the facts more than justified the language used in the resolution with regard to the Afghan war. The resolution also referred to the work of the two illustrious diplomats who represented this country at the Congress of Berlin. He ventured to say that history contained no chapter baser than that which recorded the attitude and proceedings of our representatives on that occasion. But such action was not the outgrowth of English tradition at all, but, like the central figure of the chapter, it was an alien interpolation. With regard to the war in Zululand, though it was begun without the direct knowledge and sanction of the Government, yet the Government had made themselves responsible for it by retaining in his position the author of the war. He maintained that the censure passed upon that official was a sham censure—(applause)—otherwise it would have been followed by an order for his recall. Had the war succeeded in the first instance, there probably would have been no censure at all. The latest development of this wonderful policy was in keeping with its previous stages, for the nation was now offered an entirely new device in finance—(applause)—for the demoralisation generated by the previous policy had spread to the Chancellor of the Exchequer's Budget, and the proud-spirited, honourable English nation was swerving from the path of integrity and the path of honour, and declined to pay her way. The first duty they were called upon to perform would be to humble themselves before God, and to confess their sins and the sins of the nation. He hoped the Congregational Union would adopt the ancient practice of recommending a set time for prayer in this crisis of the nation's history. If such a duty were performed, a moral influence would arise from it and lead others to follow the good example. In conclusion, he asked the Assembly to do all they could by pen and speech and effort to rid themselves of the present Government—(loud applause)—a Government that had violated the British Constitution—(Hear, hear)—that had tampered with foreign Governments—(Hear, hear)—had debauched the national conscience, disturbed and imperilled our foreign relationships, misrepresented British Christianity, and the best spirit and tradition of the British people, in casting new and manifest stumbling-blocks in the way of mission enterprise. (Applause.)

The Rev. A. H. BYLES seconded the resolution, but should have preferred that the duty had been performed by a London layman, inasmuch as while there was no doubt about the opinions of the people in the Midlands and in the North, there was an impression that the laymen in London were not all of one mind with regard to this question. (Cries of "No, no.") Some time since he saw in the *Northern Echo* an article headed, "Is England Christian or Pagan?" and, studying the arguments, he was inclined to think it was a question that might well be asked. Touching the latter part of the resolution, there was only one way of dealing with the subject, and that was to bring in another Government. (Loud cheers.) At the next election they must bring in, first, a House of Commons which should be worthier of the historic name which this country held; and, secondly, they must have a Prime Minister who should be worthy of our religious faith. There was an old proverb in an old book which seemed to him to express with some clearness the policy both of the past and the present Governments. It ran thus: "Wisdom is before the wise; but the eyes of the fool are at the ends of the earth." The speaker then referred to the action of the present Government in the purchase of the Suez Canal shares, the Berlin Treaty, and the Treaty of Batoum, and declared that prior to the year 1876, before the war broke out, Lord Beaconsfield had in his pocket the very terms of the arrangement which were come to at the Berlin Treaty, of which so much capital had been made for the Prime Minister. (Cheers.)

The Rev. J. G. ROGERS thought they were all agreed in the object of this resolution. (A cry of "No.") Then he hoped those who did not agree would be able to show good reasons for their adoration of Her Majesty's Government. (Laughter.) He referred to the fact of the Government not having issued any direct orders for engaging in the war in Zululand, and said that if it was so the natural course would

have been to stop the proceedings. No doubt the Tories would be glad to do that if only they knew how, but though they would be glad to be out of it they would vote to the end in vindication of Her Majesty's Ministers. Referring to the next general election, the result would very much depend, he said, on the conduct of the Nonconformists. He pointed out that there was a danger in the excitement of the moment with regard to foreign politics of their forgetting everything else, but he ventured to say that would be a great mistake in the interests of the Liberal party. But supposing the Liberals succeeded, who were going to be put in the place of the present Ministers? They wanted measures, and they wanted men. And for his part if he could only have the man he wanted he would be content to trust to him for his measures. He need not say who the man was that they wanted. (Applause.) There was only one man who could lead them and whom they could trust in, because they had known him through long years, and they had faith in his integrity and in his earnest devotion to liberty—and that man was William Ewart Gladstone. (Cheers.)

Mr. HENRY RICHARD, M.P., said he was glad for once to be in accord on the question of peace with the "high priests and rulers of the synagogue." (Laughter.) He could cordially support the resolution. He believed the foreign policy of Her Majesty's Government, ever since Lord Derby was pecked over the nest—(laughter)—had been in flagrant violation of all the first principles of justice and humanity. (Hear, hear.) He hardly knew who undertook to defend the foreign policy of the Government so far as South Africa was concerned. As far as he knew, the only two London journals that upheld the Government were the *Daily Telegraph* and the *Record*. (Laughter and hisses.) Scarcely a man had stood up in the House of Commons to vindicate the course the Government had taken in Zululand. Only one man, so far as he knew, had openly maintained that the war in South Africa was a just and righteous war, and that was a bishop. (Laughter.) Bishop Claughton had said that this was a just war because Providence had made use of England as the police of the world. For a thorough-going, unblushing, and unscrupulous defence of a policy of violence and blood, command him to a bishop. (Loud applause and laughter.) But there were bishops and bishops. (Hear, hear.) To one bishop he should like to take this opportunity of paying the tribute of his cordial admiration—Bishop Colenso. (Applause.) He would rather have an heterodox bishop upholding the cause of justice and humanity than an orthodox bishop whose hands were steeped in blood. (Applause.) He would not make a speech. He did that in the House of Commons some three weeks since, and at the suggestion of some of his friends he has issued that speech in the form of a pamphlet, of which copies might be had in the church that day. In supporting the resolution, he would even go further, and venture to arraign the nation, not merely for having supported the present Government in these two unnecessary and unrighteous wars, but for having been too fond of wars at all times, for he proved in his pamphlet that during the sixty-three years from 1806 this country had been engaged in no less than seventy-three distinct wars. He hoped all Christian men and Christian ministers would lift up their voices against this tendency on the part of our rulers to involve us in shedding human blood, which would hereafter be brought back with retribution upon our heads. (Applause.)

The Rev. Dr. MELLOR, of Halifax, being called on, excused himself from making a speech, as he had expressed himself fully at the Sheffield meeting.

Mr. SAMUEL PAIN proposed an amendment to leave out the words "and therefore criminal," but the proposal found no seconder.

The resolution was carried with three dissentients only.

The remaining business on the paper was deferred till Friday, and the proceedings terminated with the benediction pronounced by the chairman.

CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH AID AND HOME MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

The annual meeting was held yesterday evening in the Memorial Hall, under the presidency of Mr. Samuel Morley, M.P., supported by the Rev. W. Cuthbertson, the Rev. Dr. Wilson, the Rev. A. Hannay, Mr. Henry Lee (Manchester), the Rev. J. G. Rogers, B.A., the Rev. J. A. Macfadyen, M.A., &c.

After singing and prayer,

The CHAIRMAN, in opening the business, said there were points of special interest in this meeting. There was an appeal to the feelings in the fact that the old Home Missionary Society in one sense had ceased to exist, not because it had failed to maintain the confidence of the churches, or that there was any lessened reason for home efforts, but because the future interest of the Church rendered some changes in its constitution desirable. For a long time he had hesitated about the change, and some controversy had taken place, but happily they had all now been brought to one mind. There was, he felt, great wisdom on the part of those who originated these changes, and great tenderness for those unable at first to go so far as was suggested;

and, thank God, all were now united heartily in this great and most promising change. As an old adherent to the old missionary society, he renewed his allegiance to the new society, and he believed greater work for the Master would be done under present conditions than could ever have been done before. (Hear, hear.) He had some difficulty at first about accepting the title, but he was quite content with it, as their first duty was in the direction of aiding the churches. He knew possibly as much as most people of the condition of the country churches, and he knew that many were in a state of extreme depression. They did not, however, want charity—(Hear, hear)—or gifts in the ordinary sense; but they must be dealt with delicately. Many country ministers were in want of the healthful strengthening which they would be able to obtain through this Church Aid movement. The pecuniary condition of some of the most honoured men was such as deserved practical sympathy. (Hear, hear.) It was the determination of the committee to take wise and salutary methods to ascertain the condition in which these ministers were living, with the view of securing to them, upon terms honourable to themselves, an honourable support. (Hear, hear.) He should be thankful if it could be decided that no minister should receive less than 200*l.* a year, for that would inspirit a good many of them whilst in no sense lowering the tone of those requiring aid; for he was quite aware there was no money question in the work, though money was, of course, an important element. He felt confident that, under the leaders who would take the conduct of the new society, there would be a larger extent of communication with the smaller churches. (Hear, hear.) He was glad therefore to see the "Church Aid" standing out in the front of this institution, taking care, however, that the home mission work should not be neglected. A friend in Buckingham had made a suggestion that educated laymen should be asked to take charge of vacant country pulpits, and he thought it a good suggestion that some of their honoured laymen should be so invited, and he would be glad to be the medium of communication for that purpose. In other ways such laymen might cheer the hearts of Christian friends in the country, and he mentioned it only as an indication that the times were full of promise. He was glad to find another kind of agency—the colporteur plan—was increasing in numbers. This was an agency that might be used to raise the tone of the people in some of the counties. That tone was frequently one of great discouragement, and the occasional visit of the colporteur to such districts as required help would, he thought, be very advantageous. He believed Mr. Hannay had no reason to be dissatisfied with the response hitherto made by friends to the appeals sent out. No one than himself better knew the extreme depression that still existed, attributable to causes which he wished the people would some day take hold of and get rid of. (Applause.) There was no interest, social, political, or religious, that had not been previously injured by the state of things now existing in England. He believed now that it would pass away; and that their friends in the country would feel that this new organisation, especially in its earlier years, would need special support. With such a recognition of the position, and with unanimity existing between everyone, they might take a fresh start on the various objects of the new society, and by God's help they would be able to promote the highest and best interests of the people. (Hear, hear.)

The Rev. A. HANNAY presented the first annual report, but instead of reading it made a statement founded upon it. He explained that this was the first report of a new organisation, and consequently that the details of the report referred more to the means taken to organise the society than to any achievements that had as yet resulted. He was able with pleasure to announce that every pure Congregational County Association of England was now connected with this society. By the word "pure" he meant that there were two county associations—viz., Bedfordshire and Huntingdonshire (which included in their fellowship Congregationalists and Baptists)—which were not included; but it must not be understood that the council of the society had declined to entertain the question of fellowship with those associations, or had pronounced an adverse judgment in the matter. Far from it, for many persons longed for the time when terms could be discovered on which the brethren of the Baptist body and others of the Free Churches could be admitted to fellowship. But at present the society included all the pure county associations. He would like to explain the changes that had taken place in forming this society, as there was a good deal of confusion of thought about it even in the minds of those whose hearts were joined in the work. In some places, he found, there were proposals to make collections for the County Union, the British Mission (of which the Home Missionary Society usually received a portion) and the Church Aid Society. Well, he had no wish to interfere. (Laughter.) Ignorance sometimes had its advantages. (Renewed laughter.) It would be as well, however, to explain that down to the 10th May last the county associations were each independent of the other—each receiving money and distributing it within its own bounds. There was, in addition, the Home Missionary Society for supplementing the efforts of the weaker counties. In the past, probably that was the only organisa-

tion that was possible. It was the spirit of Congregationalism that it should be constantly adapting its methods to the changes taking place in society; and those changes of society were found to lead to congestion at one point and draining at another. The changes made to meet this new state of things were of the simplest possible order. The Home Missionary Society had come down from its metropolitan perch, on which it had sat for sixty years, and had gathered the Congregational associations of the country under its wing, so that they now lived together as one family. The associations desired one purse; that no one should have anything of its own, but that whatever the churches could afford to give should be given for the good of all, and that the funds should be distributed by a body composed of representatives of all the societies. That was the entire nature of the change that had taken place, so that when contributions were made to the county associations, they found their way to the central fund of the Church Aid Society; though it would be a matter of detail afterwards how to deal with donations if there was a desire to allocate them to special purposes. Mr. Hannay then explained the composition of the Provisional Council of 228 members, formed of representatives from each county, and the composition of the Executive Committee of forty-five members. Throughout the object had been kept in view of securing the services on the Council and Executive of representatives of the churches in the different parts of the country, and it was meant that there should be a real representation, and that the men appointed should attend, and bring their brains, and thoughts, and business qualities with them. (Hear, hear.) In regard to the appointment of officers, Mr. S. Morley, M.P., and Mr. Henry Lee were chosen treasurers. He (Mr. Hannay) had discharged the duties of secretary till an appointment could be made, and out of several nominees, Mr. Hartland had been chosen unanimously, both by ballot and other vote, to fill the post of secretary to the new society. As to the ways and means, the friends of the society last year were very sanguine; but they were rather too sanguine. Their hopes had been very imperfectly realised. Still the case was not so very bad, and was not inexplicable. The chief reason, no doubt, was that the county associations were not quite prepared, at so short a notice, for the new methods that were necessary to give effect to the society's hopes. On this point he would emphasise two observations. The first was that if this confederation was to be a stable one, and answer the end for which it was formed, there must be throughout the whole confederation a common spirit of consecration and giving. The following sums had been collected in the counties named for the years 1878 and 1879 respectively:—

	1878.	1879.
Gloucester and Hereford	£1,034	£2,022
London	1,484	3,250
Essex	815	1,250
Lancashire	3,115	4,000
Kent	455	650
Staffordshire (North)	403	680
Norfolk	242	347
Northumberland & Durham	543	675
Surrey	568	725
Worcestershire	77	285

The rest of the counties had been stationary, or had given less than in the preceding year. The second observation he wished to emphasise was that in order to sweep away all the inequalities in the way of the development of the resources of the churches in all parts of the country, it was necessary that the entire moral power of the confederation should be brought, by the several local bodies, to bear upon their churches. One of the pleas constantly urged in the days of their contention was that an appeal made in the name of the confederated churches for the weak and struggling churches would be much more powerful than one made in the name of the county association for county work; but there had been a failure in certain quarters to bring the whole moral power of the confederation to bear through the local organisations on the individual churches, and this ought to be the concern of the executive of the county associations in all parts of the country. The gross income for the year on Dec. 31 was 29,947*l.* There had been many reasons which had led the council to consider that it would be necessary in the first year to keep well within the limits of this sum, and therefore the amount voted had been 28,415*l.*, which was 6,742*l.* more than the sum voted by the associations taken by themselves in 1878, and 3,307*l.* more than was distributed by the associations and the Home Missionary Society put together. (Applause.) It was a small beginning, but one which, under the circumstances, was full of promise. In order to enable them to understand the principles by which the distribution was regulated, he would state that each association sent in the month of January what he would call a budget, setting forth the amount it proposed to contribute to the society, and how much it desired to receive. With these budgets before it, the executive proceeded on the principle of distributing the amount at its disposal—in the first place, to every association whose promised contributions were in excess of the amount it asked, it was decided to vote the precise amount asked; in the second place, to every association which asked for more than it promised, and to add to that as much as was spent within its bounds by the Home Missionary Society; and then, having applied these two principles of distribution to the amount in hand,

the surplus remaining over was equitably distributed among the beneficiary counties. (Applause.) He hoped there would be no misunderstanding of the principles on which the council distributed the money at its disposal, which he believed had given general satisfaction. (Applause.) But there was perhaps a reason why in coming years they should be modified. The action of the Home Missionary Society, by no fault of its committee, was partial. To some counties it gave generous gifts, while others were left out in the cold, and among these were some of the poorest. There was no blunder attachable to the society, but it would not do to allow this tradition to fix itself in the new administration. Each of the associations and churches must be prepared for an active and urgent pressure to support the society. A very large number of Congregational churches were at this moment being morally weakened by the want of an adequate support of the ordinances of God's house and of the payment of the ministry, and he asked them to consider how great was the claim of English society in its present moral condition upon the churches. He dare not venture to go into details, but when they saw the great abstention from public worship, and looked at the frivolous secular use which numbers were making of their wealth and knowledge and leisure; when they saw the moral temper of the people as evinced by the spirit in which class contentions were carried forward, there was enough to make the stoutest heart quail, and very much required to be done before England could be called a Christian nation. What they asked was that they should be made stronger as preachers of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ to the lapsed multitudes of the English people. God grant that the future of this society would prove that their union for that purpose had begun a new era in their history. (Loud cheers.)

The Rev. J. A. MACFADYEN moved:—"That the report which has just been submitted to the meeting be adopted and printed and circulated, and that the meeting thank the provisional council for the services which it has rendered during its year of office." He understood the purpose for which they had met together to be this—that they might solemnly pledge themselves to the accomplishment of the great work to which Mr. Hannay had so eloquently referred. He was glad they had come to such a unanimous decision, and they ought to be grateful for the fact that the society had started under such auspices. The main idea, it seemed to him, which lay at the basis of their organisation, was that they meant to do a national work for the country to which they belonged. In setting themselves to do this work, they found various schools of thought to contend with. There were some who asked if this purpose was a feasible one, and whether they were not throwing their energies and time and labour away. They were told that nations had their day, and were referred to Nineveh, Babylon, Tyre, Athens, and Rome, to show that England was destined to follow in the same steps. He, however, maintained that as Christian men they could not accept the argument, for the Gospel of Jesus Christ introduced a feature into the problem which was not in the problem of these nations. (Applause.) Were they not prepared to say that, with all the drawbacks and imperfections which they recognised in their history, England, guided by the Gospel, had made the right choice, and that she would in time to come make the right choice? To surrender to such argument would be to surrender a citadel of strength to a mere display of fireworks. (Applause.) They were also told that Christianity did not sanction patriotism, but they did not require to show their patriotism by singing in music saloons. The noble Earl of Beaconsfield was right. Although the country was now in its present condition, with disasters abroad and distrust at home, the political power of the Nonconformists had not been broken. They had set before them the triumph of religious equality, and they also intended to disestablish Lord Beaconsfield himself. (Cheers.) The other day, at the Academy, Lord Beaconsfield had said that the painters should study the history of England—and so far he heartily agreed with his lordship—but in doing so they should bring the good and worthy of the past into the present, and reproduce, as they meant to do, the past in the present and the future. Hence, they were in the best sense patriots. (Applause.) The question they should set themselves to answer was this—how could they contribute most effectively to the great public interests of their country? The best answer to that was, by personal goodness. The next consideration was that one of the best aids to the prosperity of their country was personal activity in the cause of Christ. Where there was a thoroughly good man, there was that in his example and voice which constituted the strongest argument for Christianity. But there was more than that demanded of the Congregational churches. The glorious Gospel was superior to every other form of religious thought in this—that it not only laid hold of the man but of every part of the man. If they had gold it was not theirs, but belonged to God; if they had power and influence these did not belong to them, but were unreservedly to be laid on the altar. This was an age of societies and associations, and he sympathised with every word Mr. Hannay had said. The machine would be perfectly started, and there would be no grating, but there was something in man which could not be reached by the most perfect machine; but by heart meeting heart and hand grasping hand, heart and hand would be devoted to the cause of the

Saviour. (Applause.) The third observation he had to make was that one of the most important contributions which the Congregational churches could make to the prosperity of the country was giving themselves by united and harmonious working to the evangelisation of the nation. There was no argument for foreign missions which did not come with the same force as an argument for home missions. England was part of the world, and Englishmen were part of the creatures to whom the Gospel was to be preached. They did not require to go abroad to find thousands of people living without God, living graceless lives, and all the worse because they had had the appliances of civilisation which they had turned to the service of vice and sin. They were standing on a volcano, the mutterings of which could occasionally be heard, and they were not men if they permitted this state of things to continue. They were deeper needs than those of the body, and these things could only be met by Christianity. With regard to the money aspect of the question, some might have misunderstood Mr. Hannay's words, and would say that it was a grand aim they had set before them, but that they must acknowledge they had been defeated. He did not agree with that at all. They had placed this burden on the Congregational Churches of England, and very often the burden of Atlas developed the strength to bear it. At the same time he did not think it was an unsatisfactory budget, although it might have been better; and he was quite sure that Sir Stafford Northcote would be a happier man could he present such a budget to the country as their treasurers were able to lay before them. They must remember that these 30,000*l.* had been given in a spirit of faith and accompanied by fervent prayer. The speaker concluded an eloquent speech by exhorting the council to use their means wisely, and thus become the medium of carrying the Gospel to places where ignorance and ritualism and superstition abounded, making Christ's Church a foundation and blessing to all future ages. (Applause.)

The Rev. Dr. RALEIGH seconded the resolution, and, not to encroach upon the time of other speakers—for although a London minister he had still some humility left in him—he would forbear to do more than cordially second the resolution, which was then carried unanimously.

The Rev. A. HANNAY then submitted a list of names of twenty-five gentlemen to be added to the names furnished by the several county associations to act with the Conference. The resolution was then put to the meeting and carried by acclamation.

The Rev. J. G. ROGERS, in proposing the resolution "That Samuel Morley, Esq., M.P., and Henry Lee, Esq., J.P. (and by anticipation M.P.), be treasurers, and that the Rev. A. Hannay be hon. sec., and Mr. Hartland secretary, for the ensuing year," said that Mr. Hannay in his speech appeared inclined to adopt somewhat of a pessimist tone, but he (the speaker) did not think that affairs looked desperate. Having regard to all conditions, they were in a very satisfactory position. It was true that the contributions for home missions were distributed among many societies that there was scarcely an adequate conception of the work done and still doing. Starting on its new career with an income of £30,000 for the first year, in spite of a season of unprecedented disaster and distress, showed that the churches were not indifferent to this work, although two or three counties were still outside the confederation. With unions as with individuals, there would be more joy over one opponent that was converted than over ninety and nine loyal supporters who never needed conversion. At St. Albans he had been told by the secretary that the county association for the district never raised more than 3,000*l.* a year, which they found it necessary to divide with their Baptist friends in order to meet the purposes of the confederation. He was quite certain that so long as they had denominational institutions they would, if properly managed, be a mighty power for the accomplishment of great ends. The Hertford Association had resolved in the first year to double all that was raised by the Independents and Baptists. It was a small association, but this showed what could be effected. It was impossible to overrate the influence which could be brought to bear upon a denomination. It was easy to sneer at small churches, but what could be done without them in rural districts? There were small churches and small churches; but the same law applied to them that our Lord gave to His apostles, that if they went to a city or to a house where the inhabitants resolutely refused to receive their message, they must shake the very dust from off their feet, and go to another city. If in certain localities it was found, after fair efforts had been made to promote the spiritual growth of such associations, there was a spirit of uncongeniality, or that the particular work did not prosper, then it was of no use to go on perpetuating feebleness. Where there was a prospect of a small church becoming larger and contending against serious opposition, it was a duty to maintain them in order to preserve a testimony for evangelical truth. To make those small churches stronger the power of confederation must be brought to bear upon them—not scolding or holding them up to scorn, but seeking to improve them. (Hear, hear.) If it was desired to deliver them from the charge of meanness, they must be supplied with more ample means for the support of Gospel institutions. He was not, however, sure that a little narrowness was not a necessary corrective to excessive breadth. No doubt some of these small

churches were too much disposed to walk on the old lines, and to sing the old hymn—

We are a garden walled around,
Chosen and peculiar ground.

And if it was wished to broaden them, then let them feel the breath of friendly influence from outside, and as their hearts were enlarged they would grow accordingly. This could only be done by bringing personal influence to bear upon them. (Applause.) It was said that Dissent was heavy and uncongenial, but its characteristics were due to the atmosphere in which it had been reared. Its spirit of antagonism arose from the fact that they were forced into Dissent and forced to protest, as a country church recently protested against a landlord who shut up a Methodist meeting-house, because, forsooth, he wanted to have no tenants except those who were good Churchmen. Such conduct must engender antagonism on the part of those who wished to maintain their liberty of conscience, and if they could not be delivered from oppression, at all events let them know that they had sympathising friends. (Applause.) If congregations could do nothing more than build large chapels in order to accommodate large congregations, that was not for the good of the nation. A national system must meet the wants of all classes. Large churches, some of them City churches, depended to an extent not often acknowledged upon the congregations and contributions they got from the country, not only in numbers, but, what was infinitely better, a solid element of Christianity, the backbone so frequently wanting in metropolitan and urban churches. If the rural churches were extinguished for want of support and union, it would be because Congregationalism held its hand and was not prepared to work for them. As they failed in their duty so they would have to bear the penalty. On that ground alone he was prepared to support this association, and if asked, Was it worth supporting? he would simply say that depended upon the answer to another question—Was Congregationalism worth supporting? He would not pretend that Congregationalism could do everything, but without some confederation of all their strength, in order to meet the growing religious wants of the country, Congregationalism could not grow; and if it ceased to grow it would, as it would then deserve to do, cease to live. If this confederation had been established five-and-twenty years ago, and if the church had then been raised to a sense of its duty, many of the difficult problems now facing them would have been easier of solution. Circumstances had changed, and the struggle between rival churches was greater than it ever was before. The struggle for existence on the part of a feeble church in a district overridden by squire and parson was much harder now than it was fifty years ago. It would be a great calamity if the religious work of the country were left to be done by the Church as by law established. In the democratical period on the verge of which they were now verging, if the people at large once used their power, the less and less would they be disposed to listen to the teachers of a religion which depended for its authority and power, not on Christian inspiration, but on the sanction of law and on the endowment of a Government. (Hear, hear.) The reverend gentleman then referred to the feebleness of the Protestant Church in France, and said that if the religious wants of rural districts were to be provided for only by State religionists it would be most disastrous to society, freedom, and true religion. They now had to stand between the Protestantism of England and Romanising superstition and innovation, and he trusted they were prepared to do so in a devoted and devout spirit. Their effort should be not merely to make the people Congregationalists but Christians; thereby making the nation really what it professed to be, a Christian nation. At present the term Christian nation seemed to come in tones of bitter irony, depicting the nation as what it ought to have been, but unfortunately was not. Could it be called a Christian nation with a general desecration of the day of God and the utter and absolute neglect of the ordinances by tens of thousands, nay millions of people? Could we be called a Christian people when only from a very small number there was a voice raised to protest against iniquity and wrong done simply because they had the might, and fancied that the might made the right? Superstition was growing to an alarming extent, and amongst some of the noblest intellects in the land there were those who scoffed at God and everything sacred. It was the duty of all present to rise up in a spirit of self-sacrifice and holy devotion, and resolve that they would do their part at least to make this nation truly Christian, feeling assured that if so it would have a power that would speedily bring the world to the foot of the cross of Christ. (Loud applause.)

The Rev. W. CUTHBERTSON having seconded the resolution, it was carried unanimously.

The benediction was pronounced by the Rev. A. Hannay, and the meeting terminated.

In an Eastern Counties town last Sunday, a popular minister prayed for the sick and afflicted members of the congregation that "their shoes might be iron and brass." Jones was startled, and somewhat vehemently muttered, "They would kill her in no time!" That morning he had left his wife ill in bed with influenza.

CONGRATULATORY ADDRESS TO MR. EDWARD MIALL.

On Thursday last, the 8th of May, Mr. Edward Miall having on that day concluded the seventieth year of his age, a deputation from the Executive Committee of the Liberation Society, accompanied by other gentlemen, waited upon him at his residence, Honor Oak, Forest Hill, to present him with a congratulatory address. Amongst those present were Mr. John Bright, M.P., Mr. Henry Richard, M.P., Mr. H. R. Ellington (Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Liberation Society), Mr. J. Carvell Williams (Deputy-Chairman), Mr. Hugh Mason, of Ashton-under-Lyne, the Rev. J. G. Rogers, B.A., Mr. H. S. Leonard, Mr. John Templeton, F.R.G.S., Mr. P. Crellin, Mr. Andrew Dunn, Mr. W. Baines, of Leicester, Mr. J. F. Norris, of Bristol, the Rev. John Gordon, of Kenilworth, Mr. Stafford Allen, Mr. A. H. Haggis, Mr. Joseph Craven, Thornton, Bradford, and Mr. W. P. Byles, Bradford. Mr. Duncan McLaren was absent from accident.

Mr. H. R. ELLINGTON, after a few words expressive of esteem and gratitude for the work which had been done under Mr. Miall's guidance, read the following address :

We have had the honour of being deputed by the Executive Committee of the Society for the Liberation of Religion from State Patronage and Control to wait upon you, on this your seventieth birthday; for the purpose of offering to you their hearty congratulations, and of conveying to you a renewed expression of their unabated personal regard.

Many of those associated with you at the commencement of your public work have long since been removed by death; but we rejoice that you have lived to reap largely of the fruits of your arduous labours.

You have outlived much of the aversion, or misconception, with which your aims were once regarded by a portion of your fellow-countrymen, and have won the respect of those who widely differ from you, by your singleness of purpose, and by the rectitude and the consistency with which those aims have been pursued.

The intellectual ability, the earnestness, the self-sacrifice, and the elevation of tone with which, in the columns of the *Nonconformist*, on the public platform, and in the House of Commons, you have expounded and enforced the principles of Christian willihood and of religious equality have instructed and stimulated many who are now labouring, as you have laboured, to induce the nation to accept those principles as the basis of national legislation.

The organisation which we have the pleasure of representing, and which largely owes its existence to your exertions and your practical wisdom, has, year by year, grown in strength and in efficiency; has succeeded in effecting many of its objects, and now anticipates, with well-grounded confidence, the completion of its work. Not only has the idea of disestablishment become familiar to the mind of the British public, and ceased to excite serious alarm; it is now accepted, with more or less reserve, by numerous members of the Established Churches, and there is a general belief that its adoption in England and Scotland will follow its adoption in the sister country, where the change has been effected, and with highly advantageous results.

The progress thus made is doubtless attributable to various agencies; but it is to a large extent due to the faith, the courage, and the patience displayed by yourself, and by your colleagues, at a time when the difficulties to be encountered seemed to some to be insurmountable, and the prospect of ultimate success was altogether remote.

It occasioned your many friends the deepest regret when failing strength obliged you to relinquish your Parliamentary and other public duties; and we are sure of their sympathy in expressing the earnest desire that you may be spared to rejoice in the fulfilment of your utmost hopes in connection with the struggle in which you have borne so distinguished a part.

Meanwhile, we trust that, in your enforced retirement from the activities of public life, you will be cheered by witnessing the unchecked advance of this, and of every other cause to which you have devoted the best energies of your mind and heart, and that the Divine blessing may rest upon you to the close of your useful and honourable life.

Mr. CARVELL WILLIAMS stated that letters had been received expressive of inability to attend from, amongst others, the Rev. J. P. Mursell, of Leicester, the Rev. Dr. Acworth, the Rev. Chas. Stovel, Mr. Wm. Edwards, the Rev. Dr. Alexander Maclaren, of Manchester; Mr. Titus Salt, of Bradford; Mr. Robert Kell, of Bradford; Mr. Colman, M.P.; Dr. R. W. Dale, of Birmingham; and Mr. Samuel Watts, of Manchester. Mr. Alfred Illingworth had also sent a congratulatory telegram from Algiers.

Mr. ANDREW DUNN stated that Mr. Spurgeon had sent through him a message of sympathy.

Mr. JOHN BRIGHT, M.P., then rose, and said that there was no man in the country for whom he entertained a greater esteem and regard than for Mr. Miall. He recalled his correspondence and interview with him before the establishment of the *Nonconformist* newspaper forty years ago, to which he (Mr. Bright) was a contributor. Mr. Bright referred to "the great literary ability, the consistency, and the high regard for moral principle" with which that journal had been conducted. Not only for its educational teaching, he said, but as an instrument for the formation of character, it had established no common claim to their respect. Mr. Bright proceeded in few words to refer to disestablishment, expressing the hope that its difficulties would not be underrated, and his own expectations that the Church would be overturned

by internal convulsions. But the present position of the question in England, and the state of the public mind with regard to it, was, before all, due to the great labours of their dear friend Mr. Miall, who had held forth an example of great and noble work which would have a great and noble end.

Mr. RICHARD, M.P., in a few words expressed his own personal regard, and their indebtedness to Mr. Miall for his labours on the manhood suffrage, peace, and other questions.

The Rev. J. G. ROGERS recalled his early acquaintance with Mr. Miall, referred to the great transition which had taken place since then, and to the manner in which, at one time, Mr. Miall had been assailed. He expressed his gratitude especially for the "Bases of Belief."

The Rev. JOHN GORDON also expressed his affectionate regard and his estimation of the manner in which Mr. Miall had made the question of disestablishment one of religious principle.

Mr. MIALL replied as follows:—"Old and dear Friends,—Let me welcome and thank you, as I do, from the depths of my heart. Your visit, though not without a shade of pathos in it, is a pleasant one for me, and awakens feelings, as well as memories, which, during the short span of life now left to me, I shall look back upon with much gratitude. I did not expect it, though I am not surprised at it. I worked among you too long, and received too many proofs of your kind confidence, to make it a matter of astonishment to me that you should follow me into the retirement which advanced years have forced upon me to greet me with your loving message. Pray accept my honest thanks, and my personal good wishes for you all, especially for that organisation of which you are on this occasion the representatives. Some of those who were associated with me in founding that organisation, and in watching over its infancy and stimulating its growth, have, as you remind me, entered into their rest. Others, like myself, have lost the power of active service, without, however, losing their interest in the work. My great and enduring solace is this—that the movement for the liberation of religion from State patronage and control is now far beyond the reach of personal changes. It is a moral force which has its life and vigour in itself; it is sure of triumph, though many of us perhaps will not live to see it. Like the ocean tide, it rolls onward, and, in spite of casual fluctuations upon its surface, will roll onward until it has reached the limit prepared for it. Ours, my dear friends, has been mainly, if not exclusively, a teaching work. We told the world at the very first the great truth we intended to impart to the understanding and to impress upon the conscience. From this object we have never swerved. I think I may say we have been 'instant in season and out of season.' For some few years we confined our efforts chiefly to Dissenters, and, having indoctrinated them, as we supposed, we took a wider range, and, to some extent, varied our action. But while we engaged in the removal, one after another, of the practical inequalities which a Church Establishment necessarily creates, we never for a moment lost sight of the end we originally contemplated; nor did we suffer the world to lose sight of it. The removal of legal grievances was rather regarded as a special means to that end—a step towards it, not going very far, it is true, but still leading the mind in the right direction; and offering suitable occasions for discussing, illustrating, and enforcing our main principle. Happily we have never been disposed to compromise the claims of the great truth we took upon ourselves to advance, and we stand before the world at this moment unsuspected, unless it be by those who care not to study the course we have pursued, of being guided to issues which we have not always openly professed. It has been my privilege to work with you, my dear friends, for a long course of years. I have but one cause of regret, and that is that my motives have been so imperfect and so mixed in what I have been allowed to do, and that my actual labours have been so inconsiderable compared with what I could and ought to have done. But it is a matter of devout thankfulness to me that my life has been mainly spent in the furtherance of an object which I can now regard with even greater satisfaction than when I started in my public career—one, the importance of which acquires a deeper tone every day that I live—one for which I am far from regretting that I spent my chief and almost undivided energies—and one, the eventual realisation of which, whatever may become of my name, will be a vast accession of good, political and spiritual, to my fellow-men. I have said not all that I wished to say, but all that I have strength to say. May you soon witness the accomplishment of your work, and may the Church of Christ, as the instrument of regenerating mankind, ere long become free to use her great power over the souls of men, unimpeded by the shackles that worldly wisdom has mistakenly thrown around her!"

The members of the deputation then proceeded to sign the address, which was handsomely bound in crimson morocco, embossed, and engrossed on vellum. Mr. Miall, who was surrounded by the members of his family, afterwards entertained his visitors at luncheon, who warmly congratulated him on his apparently unimpaired health.

At a meeting of the executive of the Bradford Liberal Electoral Association, held on Wednesday, the following resolution was passed:—"That Mr. Joseph Craven and Mr. W. P. Byles be appointed a deputation from this association to present an

address on the 8th inst. to Mr. Edward Miall, late M.P. for Bradford, on the occasion of his attaining the age of seventy years, and this association requests these gentlemen to convey to Mr. Miall its deep sense of the value of his great services in the cause of civil and religious equality in the past, and its fervent hope that he may be long spared to continue the noble work to which he has so long devoted his life."

The following address from the Leeds Nonconformist Union was, we understand, received by Mr. Miall in the course of the day:—

TO EDWARD MIALL, ESQ., LONDON.

Dear Sir,—The executive committee of the "Leeds Nonconformist Union" desire very heartily to join in tendering you their most sincere congratulations that you have, in the good providence of God, been permitted to see the close of your seventieth year, and beg to assure you of their fervent prayers for your future welfare; that in the years that may be further graciously vouchsafed you—be they many or few—you may continue to enjoy many tokens of the Divine favour, and be cheered by seeing the growth, the almost universal recognition—if not the final triumph—of those principles with which your name has been so long and honourably associated.

Casting a backward glance over the last forty years—a period that marks the beginning of a new era in the ecclesiastical history of our country—they gratefully acknowledge the untold debt of obligation the Free Churches of this country owe to you, for your uncompromising advocacy of the principles of civil and religious equality. For more than half a lifetime you have stood in the foremost rank of those who have been bravely battling on behalf of an unpopular cause against powerful vested interests and deep-rooted personal prejudices. They admire and revere the patriotic and self-sacrificing spirit of the Christian patriot who has been enabled, amid the scorn, obloquy, and derision of bitter and unscrupulous opponents to maintain his honour untarnished, and to preserve throughout the turmoil of political strife a character of unsullied integrity.

They rejoice with you in the success of a movement which, under God, they believe owes not a little of its growing popularity to the great ability, fidelity, consistency, and rare devotion which has characterised your leadership. And now, "when the shadows are beginning to lengthen"—when life is well-nigh all retrospective—when "the grasshopper shall be a burden, and desire faileth," they would humbly and devoutly join with you in thanking God for all the work and service He has enabled you to accomplish—by the press, on the platform, and in the council chamber of the nation, in hastening the coming of that glorious day when the dream of the Italian patriot shall be realised,—"A free Church in a free State."

On behalf of the executive committee,

We are, dear sir, yours very faithfully,
J. REYNOLDS
F. H. MILLARD } Hon. Secs.
F. THOMAS

Leeds, May 8, 1879.

It is stated that Viscount Bury, heir to the Earldom of Albemarle, was received into the Romish Church on Easter Sunday.

The Rev. J. H. Lummis, of Wisbech, who has lately been largely employed in the Eastern Counties by the Liberation Society, was one of the competitors for the prize of 100*l* offered by the Lord's Day Observance Society for the best essay on the original foundation and sanctions of the Sabbath institute. In their award just issued, there are twenty essays, out of the ninety-seven sent in, which have received honourable mention from the adjudicators, Mr. Lummis's essay standing high amongst those twenty.

THE OLD CATHOLICS AND THE POPE.—Dr. Döllinger has, under date the 4th May, written from Munich an emphatic letter to the Rev. Dr. Nevin, at Rome, requesting him to give the most absolute contradiction to the falsehoods which have been spread over all Europe respecting his contemplated or actual submission to the Vatican decrees. It appears that shortly after his accession Leo XIII., desirous of winning back those forces lost by Pius IX., commenced that policy which will receive its full illustration in the creation to be made at the approaching consistory by sending a distinguished ecclesiastic to Dr. Döllinger to call him back. The reason advanced was "there was a new Pope." Dr. Döllinger smiled quietly and replied, "But the same Papacy." The Vatican had no answer to give to this, and so the negotiations terminated.

DR. DE JONGH'S LIGHT-BROWN COD LIVER OIL.—SURPASSING EFFICACIOUS AS A RESTORATIVE MEDICINE AND FOOD.—Dr. Whitmore, Medical Officer of Health, St. Marylebone, writes:—"My own somewhat lengthened experience as a Medical Practitioner enables me with confidence to recommend Dr. de Jongh's Light-Brown Cod Liver Oil as being more uniform in quality, more certain in its effects, more palatable, and infinitely less likely to disagree with the stomach than the Pale Oil. The practice which often prevails of mixing certain ingredients with Cod Liver Oil, to render it agreeable to the taste, is highly objectionable, for we have it on the authority of Dr. de Jongh himself that anything which sophisticates it takes largely from its therapeutic value. If I were asked for an explanation of the marked success which for so many years has attended the administration of Dr. de Jongh's Light-Brown Cod Liver Oil, I should say that it is owing to its extraordinary medicinal, dietetic, and regimen properties, and which are found to exist in no other medicine that I am acquainted with, in such uniform combination." Dr. de Jongh's Light-Brown Cod Liver Oil is sold only in capsules imperial half-pints, 2*s*. 6*d*.; pints, 4*s*. 9*d*.; quarts, 9*s*.; with his stamp and signature and the signature of his sole consignees on the capsule and the label under wrapper, by all chemists. Sole consignees, Assar, Harford, and Co., 77, Strand, London.—[ADVT.]

PEACE SOCIETY.

THE SIXTY-THIRD ANNUAL MEETING

will be held in

FINSBURY CHAPEL, MOORFIELDS,
on TUESDAY EVENING, MAY, 20, 1879.

The chair will be taken by J. W. PEASE, Esq., M.P., at half-past Six o'clock.

The meeting will be addressed by A. M. Sullivan, Esq., M.P.; Sir Wilfrid Lawson, Bart., M.P.; Lewis Fry, Esq., M.P.; George Palmer, Esq., M.P.; Rev. J. McCarthy; Sir Charles Reed, F.S.A.; Henry Richard, Esq., M.P.; and other gentlemen. Admission free.

IRISH EVANGELICAL SOCIETY.

The SIXTY-FIFTH ANNUAL MEETING will be held in FINSBURY CHAPEL, on MONDAY EVENING, MAY 19, 1879.

Chairman—Sir CHARLES REED.

Speakers.—Rev. W. Cuthbertson, B.A., Chairman of the Congregational Union of England and Wales; Rev. Dr. Mellor, of Halifax; Rev. John White, of Belfast; and others.

The Chair will be taken at Half-past Six o'clock.

EVANGELICAL CONTINENTAL SOCIETY.

The ANNUAL MEETING of this Society will be held on THURSDAY NEXT, MAY 15, at CAMBERWELL GREEN CHAPEL. The Chair to be taken by J. H. FORDHAM, Esq. The Revs. W. M. Statham and F. Hastings will address the Meeting; also Monsieur REVEILLAUD, from Troyes (Author of "La Question Religieuse"); and Pastor Dardier, of Geneva. Chair to be taken at Seven o'clock.

RAGGED CHURCH AND CHAPEL UNION,

4, TRAFALGAR SQUARE, CHARING CROSS, W.C.

The ANNUAL MEETING of the above Society will be held in EXETER HALL (Lower Room), TUESDAY EVENING, MAY 27, 1879.

The Chair will be taken by ROBERT BAXTER, Esq., at Seven o'clock p.m.

The following gentlemen will take part in the Meeting:—Rev. R. J. Simpson, Rector of St. Clement's Danes; Rev. Burman Cassin, Rector of St. George's, Southwark; Rev. R. H. Lovell, of Victoria Park; Rev. W. Frith, of Gunnersbury; Rev. W. Tyler, of Spitalfields; Rev. C. J. Whitmore, of Whitefield Presbyterian Church, Drury-lane; Capt. J. Smith; Col. J. W. F. Sandwith.

ARMY SCRIPTURE READERS' AND SOLDIERS' FRIEND SOCIETY.

The ANNUAL MEETING of the above Society will be held at WILLY'S ROOMS, King-street, St. James's (Large Room upstairs), on WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON, MAY 21, 1879, at 3 p.m.

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It is also anticipated that, whilst the Congregation are doing their utmost to meet the very considerable outlay in repairs and renovation, as well as the cost of the Memorial, that other friends, who on personal or public grounds were attached to the late Pastor, will be glad to unite in erecting to his memory this mark of esteem and affection.

CONTRIBUTIONS will be thankfully received and acknowledged by the Pastor,

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The Nonconformist.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 14, 1879.

THE WEEK.

THE discouraging view taken last week of the state of affairs in South Africa has, to a large extent, been confirmed. Lord Chelmsford has again demanded large reinforcements, and it is understood that 5,000 troops will soon be added to the largest English force ever gathered in that colony. His lordship is beginning to realise the magnitude of the task to which Sir Bartle Frere has committed this country, and which is now accepted by Her Majesty's Ministers. As the *Daily News* correspondent at Durban telegraphs under date April 17, "the Zulu war on our side is only commencing in earnest." The plan of the campaign, which embraces the advance of two principal columns operating from bases very wide apart upon the stronghold of Cetewayo at Ulundi, requires many more troops to act as a reserve, in order to prevent a sudden irruption of the Zulus into Natal. Till they arrive it will be hazardous for Lord Chelmsford to advance; and when they arrive the season will be very unfavourable for active warfare and injurious to armies in the field. This is a very serious prospect on many grounds. The active Zulus by eluding their invaders can wear them out, and allow a fatal climate to work its effects. Hardships and losses are probably in store for our soldiers far more than victories in the field, and pecuniary burdens for the mother country which may exceed ten millions sterling.

The only relief to the dark picture is the better news from the Transvaal. After much negotiation with the High Commissioner, the Boers have accepted Sir Bartle's terms as the basis of a final arrangement, broken up their camp at Pretoria, and dispersed quietly to their homes declaring for peace.

While Alexander I., Prince of Bulgaria, has gone to Livadia to take counsel of the Czar before his formal acceptance of the dignity conferred upon him, matters in Eastern Roumelia are quietly settling down. The Emperor of Russia has given an earnest of his good faith by issuing a ukase to the population of that Principality, which declares that the Czar is resolved that all the stipulations of the Treaty of Berlin shall be executed; announces that the evacuation of the two provinces will be effected within the period agreed by Europe; and concludes by reminding the Bulgarians that the least return they can make to their benefactor is not to disturb by untimely agitation the peace which His Majesty so earnestly desires to see maintained. The Bulgarians on both sides of the Balkans are reminded that they have now the shaping of their destinies in their own hands, and the Emperor does not even hesitate to tell them that they ought not to preoccupy themselves with the political possibilities of the future, but should dedicate their undivided energies to promoting the prosperity of their own province, as defined and limited by European arrangement. General Obrutschef, the bearer of this important proclamation, has obtained the sanction of the Porte to its issue, and has read it with much ceremony before the notables of Eastern Roumelia at Philippopolis, and is in fact bent upon allaying in that province the discontent fomented by Generals Dondoukoff and Stolepine by promising that Turkish troops shall not garrison the Balkans or occupy any portion of their country. Another Russian general is expected to assist at the installation of Aleko Pasha, the new Governor-General, after which the Czar's forces will be leisurely withdrawn.

In all this the Sultan complacently acquiesces. Why should he take upon himself a troublesome and costly obligation, when he wants money that he may disband troops whose pay is several months in arrear? Russia has agreed by way of *quid pro quo* to forego part of the Turkish indemnity, and the Court of St. Petersburg is trying with much success to bring about closer relations with the Porte, and destroy British influence at Constantinople. Apparently Her Majesty's Ministers are not particularly concerned at this remarkable transformation. In the *Standard* of yesterday there appeared an article on the subject, which he believed to be inspired by our Foreign Office, if not written by Lord Salisbury himself. The *Pall Mall Gazette* thus indignantly summarises its conclusions:—"It is clearly stated that it is quite within the power of the Sultan to supersede the Treaty of Berlin by a private arrangement with Russia, and his sovereignty over Roumelia, which our Plenipotentiaries triumphed in insisting on, is called a *caput mortuum*, which neither that province nor Bulgaria 'need trouble itself about.' In short, here we have a laughing acknowledgment that the Treaty of Berlin, as represented to the country when it was signed, was as much a farce as the Asia Minor Convention; and that we must learn to take a new view of our interests in the existence and independence of the Turkish Empire, which were and are all nonsense." This is what "peace with honour" has come to! We rejoice indeed at the result; but that result has arisen from the ridiculous failure of Lord Beaconsfield's vaunted Eastern policy.

A similar fiasco has taken place in respect to Egypt. A month ago our Foreign Office, in conjunction with the French Government, appeared disposed to carry matters with a high hand. It has all come to nothing. The threat of obtaining from the Sultan a firman to depose the Khedive has turned out to be a mere *brutum fulmen*, and Ismail Pasha is dismissing all European officials, increasing his armaments, and contracting loans at heavy interest with native bankers, while he takes no notice of the formal protests of the French and English Governments. The grand policy which was inaugurated by the purchase of Suez Canal shares has culminated in the expulsion of British financial agents, the repudiation by the Khedive of the bondholders' claims, and a general defiance of the Western Governments. Mr. Bourke, it is true, said last night that the joint action of the two Governments in respect to Egypt had not been abandoned, but there are no present signs that any action at all is being taken. Not that we should justify such interference in the interests of money-lenders, but we only refer to the matter as a further illustration of the collapse of the "spirited foreign policy" of the Government.

Some of our suburban readers know by bitter experience the real character of what are called "the gate meetings" held within ten miles of London which it is the object of the Racecourses (Metropolis) Bill to put down. This measure passed the Commons with the languid support of the Government. In the Upper House Ministers issued a strong whip against it. Let us see the nature of the nuisance which the Jockey Club patronises, the Duke of Richmond defends, and Lord Beaconsfield has voted to conserve. Mr. Cross says the races in question are not conducted "with proper decency." Lord Enfield, in moving the second reading of the bill referred to, remarked:—"What was the character of these gate meetings? A sporting publican who rented a few acres of grass got up these races, built a stand, erected booths, and charged a toll from those who came upon the ground. A mob of low betting-men, welshers, sharpers, roughs, and pickpockets were attracted, and the unhappy animals which were engaged in these contests were of such a character and condition that probably no cab or van proprietor would give 25/- for the winner of the so-called 'Great Swindleham and Milkham Handicap.' The President of the Council pleads that all these abuses can be reformed

by the Jockey Club. But that racing fraternity has done absolutely nothing, and the House of Lords decided by 84 to 57 votes, against the Government, and in favour of abolishing these scenes of crime, disorder, and ruffianism. It was an occasion when the Episcopalian Bench, as the professed guardians of public morality, might be expected to come to the front. The two Archbishops and the Bishop of London did, indeed, vote for the bill, but no other prelate was present to support this much-needed measure, although it was thought to be in serious peril in consequence of the adverse Government whip.

There will be general agreement in Mr. Gladstone's statement that the question raised by Mr. Dillwyn last night, relative to the recent exercise of the royal prerogative, was discussed under "unhappy circumstances." A motion the terms of which are so misunderstood that the framer withdraws it at the last moment to substitute for it one of so different a character that there is general unpreparedness to discuss it, must necessarily fail to secure its intended purpose. This is the more to be regretted because we do not sympathise with the objection of Mr. Gladstone, that it is useless further to object to what a majority of the House of Commons has already approved. The subject had been by no means exhausted, and it is to be hoped that, notwithstanding the confused character of last night's proceedings, the protests made by those who believe that both the Crown and the Government have of late departed from a sound constitutional policy may act as a salutary check on tendencies of so dangerous a character. The question is one which will have to be decided by the people, and some of the historical facts cited by Mr. Dillwyn and Mr. Courtney will be of considerable value in future discussions on the subject.

The Conservatives of Canterbury have barely saved the seat for that city—their candidate, Colonel Laurie, having been elected by a majority of only 56 (1,159 to 1,103 votes) over Mr. Edwards, the Liberal. It appears that at the last election the Conservative vote was 329 more, and that of the Liberals 169 less than on the present occasion. This, says the *Standard*, in one of its candid moods, "indicates a reviving strength in the Opposition in the country to which we ought not to allow the continued incoherence of the Opposition in Parliament to blind us." It is not surprising that in view of such unfavourable omens, the Government are confirmed in their resolution to allow the present Parliament to run its full legal length. The Chancellor of the Exchequer indirectly announced this decision last week when he stated that the Government were not prepared to bring in a bill to dispose of the vacant seats till next session.

On the eve of his installation as a cardinal of the Romish Church Dr. Newman delivered a discourse thoroughly characteristic of this accomplished divine, but one which excites anew the general surprise at the attitude taken up by so noble a man and so powerful an intellect. The new cardinal, albeit he has unwavering firm faith in the ultimate triumph of the Church where he has found rest, takes a very sombre view of the state of society. It is, he says, Liberalism and the right of private judgment that are impairing the influence of true religion, and with it the highest interests of humanity. All modern society, he says, is built upon liberalism in religion—the false doctrine that there is no positive truth in dogma, and that one creed is as good as another. The dictum that "Christianity is the law of the land," "with a hundred others which followed upon it, is gone, or is going, everywhere; and by the end of the century, unless the Almighty interferes, it will be forgotten." The utterance of such very shallow sentiments by a thoughtful theologian whose insight has been thought to be profound is hardly credible. It is painful to observe so conscientious and heroic a nature ignoring all the teachings of experience, and prostrating his soul before a fetish like the Papacy.

SKETCHES FROM THE GALLERY.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, Monday Night.

A statement by Sir Stafford Northcote incidentally made on Thursday night appears to settle the vexed question of the date of the dissolution. Sir Stafford was asked when he proposed to fulfil his pledge of allotting the vacant seats. With an ingenuous manner which he sometimes assumes with great success, the Chancellor replied that it certainly was the intention of the Government to bring in a bill on the subject before the dissolution, but there was no particular hurry. "Indeed," he added, when the cheers and laughter this remark excited had subsided, "there is little chance of such a measure being introduced this session." Members generally were delighted beyond measure at this announcement. From the Opposition benches there were, of course, a few deprecatory cries. But the average member of Parliament must be more than human who desires to hasten the date of the dissolution.

It is all very well for a score or two whose seats are certain, or for the half-dozen of leaders who look to a new Parliament to place them in power. But the general election means for members generally a season of worry and a time of expense. If the evil day can be put off by a month or six months, or, better still, a year, it is so much time gained; and in the House of Commons there are few Ministerial decisions more popular than one which delays the general election. I believe that nothing Mr. Gladstone did in the active days of his power created greater bitterness than the sudden and unexpected dissolution of 1874. This is a mistake which Lord Beaconsfield will not commit, and it now seems settled (as your readers will remember I have always represented as being the most likely course) that Parliament will sit over this session and at least midway into next. I believe the intention of Ministers is to shape all their energy towards forming a desirable Budget for next year. Finance has always been their weak point, but they hope that by next spring their foreign difficulties will be overcome, and that with reviving trade they will be able to show a balance-sheet comparable with some of those which, in former and happier days, Mr. Gladstone was accustomed to present year after year.

In the absence of that "heroic legislation" which on behalf of a Conservative Government Sir Stafford Northcote deprecates, questions form the most interesting part of the night's sitting. It is then that the members put leading interrogations, and get more or less unsatisfactory answers. Towards the end of last week reports from the seat of war at Natal led to some anxious questioning. The telegram in the *Daily News* describing the state of affairs in Natal, and reporting an application for further reinforcements, had startled the country out of the repose into which it had been lulled on the supposition that all that was necessary had been accomplished, and that now there was nothing to do but await the arrival of the news of certain victories. It could scarcely be credited that Lord Chelmsford, after receiving twice as many reinforcements as he had asked for, should be clamouring for more. And yet, as appeared when Colonel Stanley rose to reply to a question on this matter, such demand had been made. It was instructive to note that the telegram from Lord Chelmsford had been received on Tuesday night; but it was on Thursday night, and then only in reply to pointed questions, that the Ministry communicated to the House this new and important fact. When they would have told the truth, or in what form they would have disguised it, had not "our old friend the newspapers" inconveniently brought the news, is matter for conjecture.

In the continued absence of Mr. Biggar and Mr. Parnell the business of the House is progressing slowly but decorously. Obstruction seems to have died as suddenly as it had birth. There is, of course, no lack of discussion, but nothing in the shape of obstruction. Mr. O'Donnell, who formed one of the Triumvirate of Obstruction, is in regular attendance, and occasionally delivers a long and monotonous harangue. But beyond the consequent delay, which is measured by the length of his speech, he can no longer be regarded as an Obstructive. Mr. O'Connor Power, who was also to the fore during the campaign of obstruction, comes and goes and sometimes makes a long speech; whilst only the other day the Major casually observed that "Her Majesty's Ministers reminded him of the young nobles of ancient Rome when in their cups." There was a time when such a remark would have set the House

ablaze. Now it only creates a mild surprise—a sort of raising of the Parliamentary eyebrows.

Under these circumstances progress is made slowly but steadily. The Army Discipline Bill, against which Mr. Parnell had recorded a whole page of amendments, occupied a succession of quiet hours on Thursday night, and the only man who succeeded in raising anything like a breeze was the Home Secretary. This happened after dinner, at a time when the committee had settled steadily down to work. Mr. Cross had dined, and felt at ease with all men. Coming in he found his colleague, Colonel Stanley, at his post, pegging away at a penal clause, which excited a good deal of criticism among military members. There was evidently a hitch somewhere, and it seemed to Mr. Cross that what was wanted was a master mind. Now the Home Secretary, if he has a weakness, is a little prone to consider his own the master mind on the Treasury benches. With the most benevolent intention he plunged into a debate of which he knew absolutely nothing, and, as his manner is, talked a little amiable claptrap—in this particular case dealing with the desirable condition of equality before the law between officers and privates. "Don't let it go forth to the country," he said to the gallant officers who chiefly composed the committee, "that you want to make one law for the soldier and another for the officer."

The awful stillness which reigned throughout the House during these remarks Mr. Cross accepted as a sign of conviction on the part of his auditory, and sat down with his usual pleased expression, casting glances round the House as who should say, "Here is Stanley, a good, well-meaning fellow, but a little slow. He has been pottering away at this all night. I just drop in after dinner, listen to half a speech, see the whole thing at a glance, and settle it in a dozen sentences." From this pleasing dream the Home Secretary was awakened by a perfect storm of contumely. Shells burst around his astonished head from all parts of the House; Colonel Jervis, a faithful supporter of Her Majesty's Government, being moved to flights of denunciatory eloquence, his capacity for which has hitherto been wholly unsuspected. Mr. Cross had, in short, "put his foot into it" in a direful manner. He had wholly misunderstood the question, and altogether misrepresented views expressed by Major Nolan and others. But the incident need not be regretted if it has the effect of convincing Mr. Cross that there are some things which even he does not know—some phases of the House of Commons which even he cannot control.

On Friday the House had an interesting, though I am afraid it will prove a not very practical, debate on the question of the law of restraint for rent on agricultural holdings. Nothing came of it, except the usual assurance from the Government that they were already "deeply considering the matter." This discussion prevented the House getting into committee; but to-night the new rule gives the Government the whip hand of private members, and so considerable progress has been made with the Estimates. Before the House went into committee there was some significant conversation with respect to Mr. Dillwyn's motion on the prerogative of the Crown. There is a general feeling on the Opposition benches that the resolution is unhappily worded, and that the censure of the House should be directed rather against the Ministers than the Sovereign. In deference to this opinion, Mr. Dillwyn proposes to alter his resolution, and, after a long consultation with the Speaker, such alteration was made as will render it possible for the debate to proceed to-morrow night.

MR. RYLANDS'S FINANCIAL RESOLUTIONS.—When the motion of the hon. member for Warrington was under discussion in the House of Commons some remarks appeared in our "Notes from the Gallery" which were based upon wrong information. We understand that, contrary to the statement there made, the action taken by Mr. Rylands was generally approved by the party, and we have the best reason for believing that from first to last Mr. Gladstone was consulted in the matter, and from the outset expressed his cordial concurrence with the steps taken by the hon. member. We have the more satisfaction in contradicting prejudicial rumours because, during a long Parliamentary career, Mr. Rylands has never swerved from the support of advanced Liberal opinions, including all measures bearing on religious equality. He may with simple truth be referred to as an example of political consistency, and of activity in the support of definite convictions, which is by no means universal on the Liberal benches, either above or below the gangway.

RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY.

The eightieth anniversary meeting of this society was held at Exeter Hall on Friday last. The Earl of Shaftesbury occupied the chair, and among those on the platform were Sir Wm. Muir, Capt. J. K. White, Mr. R. N. Fowler, Rev. S. Hebditch, Rev. Dr. McAll, Rev. Dr. Nolan, &c. After the singing of a hymn, prayer was offered by the Rev. J. B. White.

The Rev. Dr. MANNING, one of the secretaries, said the report which he held in his hand was a compact and bulky volume printed in the smallest type and with the utmost condensation of matter, and yet extending to nearly 500 pages. In former years he had selected one or other of the various countries mentioned in the report, and given a brief statement of what the society had been doing there. He proposed that evening to speak about the funds and how they were expended. Dr. Manning then entered into particulars, and showed how assistance was rendered in various ways to missionary efforts at home and abroad. The report stated that during the past year the society had made grants to the amount of 43,362*l.*, whilst its total benevolent income had only been 26,417*l.*, which was partly accounted for by the receipt of fewer donations than in former years. The excess of grants over the receipts available for its mission work was 16,945*l.*, which amount had been supplied from the trade funds. During the last five years the society's missionary operations had nearly doubled. While grateful to God for that great extension, and the blessings which accompanied it, the committee feared lest the funds at their disposal for the future should prove inadequate to the demands made upon them. Not only were new fields of labour opening out, but enlarged grants were needed for the old ones where the seed sown was bearing abundant fruit. Such was the case in France, where a great religious movement was going on. Mr. McAll's successful mission in Paris was being extended to many provincial towns, and God's blessing rested upon their labours. One of the society's secretaries, who had been specially delegated to investigate statements and collect information, reports that the extent and importance of the movement had in no degree been exaggerated, and he advised that a large additional expenditure was needed to meet the claims of that country. The issue of the *Boy's Own Paper* was next referred to, and the reasons given which had induced the committee to attempt an enterprise which had met with unexpected success.

The total amount received from sales, missionary receipts, and all other sources, including last year's balance, is 149,125*l.* 12*s.* 10*d.* The total expenditure in both trade and grant departments has been 145,930*l.* 18*s.* 6*d.*, leaving a balance in favour of the society of 3,194*l.* 14*s.* 4*d.* There have been issued during the year 624 new publications, of which 217 were tracts. The total circulation from the home depot, including books, tracts, periodicals counted in numbers, cards and miscellaneous issues, has reached 60,341,750, of which 28,599,035 are tracts.

The issues from foreign depots may be safely stated at 10,000,000, making a total circulation of 70,341,750, and of 1,853,341,750 since the formation of the society.

Details are given in the full report issued by the society of the work carried on in different countries. In France there had been much to encourage the friends of Protestantism. Greater freedom of action, less official interference, and increased interest in religious questions had cheered the workers. The evangelistic efforts and distribution of publications at the Paris Exhibition, and at the mission rooms, the extension of Mr. McAll's mission to Lyons and Marseilles, and the many instances of fresh and increased interest in Evangelical Protestantism were most encouraging. French Protestants feel that a crisis in the religious history of their country is at hand, and the committee had endeavoured to the utmost of their power to help them to take advantage of the many openings afforded for the circulation of the truth. At the Paris Exhibition the society's stand contained a selection of publications in various languages, and a large number of tracts were distributed there, and also by Mr. McAll at his services at the Salle Evangélique and by other agencies. The special outlay at the Exhibition was about 1,000*l.* Besides that the committee had assisted the Depot Central, the Paris Tract Society, Miss De Broen's Belleville Mission, and Mr. McAll's Mission to the Working Men with grants of tracts and money. They had also made grants to half-a-dozen religious periodicals to extend their gratuitous circulation, and to various gentlemen and societies in Paris and the province.

Belgium.—In Belgium the Société Evangélique, which had 100 preaching stations, had been granted 10*l.* for the publication of tracts, and grants had also been made to Courtrai, Antwerp, and other places.

Switzerland.—The Evangelical Society had received 200*l.*, and 217,000 publications had been distributed by its colporteurs with many encouraging results.

Italy.—The various Evangelical churches now number 163, with over 18,000 communicants. The depot at Rome had sold some 3,000 publications in Italian, and Signor Capellini had been granted tracts for distribution to the Italian soldiers amongst whom he labours. In Florence several periodicals had been assisted, and some important publications were about to be published, including Dr. Donald Fraser's *Synoptical Lectures on Ho'ly*

Scripture. To Naples, Turin, and Sicily grants of publications had been made.

Spain.—The annual report of the Madrid Committee stated that 160,650 tracts had been distributed gratuitously, and 9,729 books and large tracts had been sold. Toleration had been continued, though sometimes restricted by the governor of the town or village. Mr. L. B. Armstrong had returned to Spain and continued his evangelistic labours, and reported his conviction that wherever the Gospel was faithfully preached, there some received it and were converted. The sale of the Scriptures was increasing, and missionary work was carried on in the large towns, and by Spaniards in the small towns and villages. The total amount granted to Spain reached 680*l.* A conference, which one of the secretaries would attend, was arranged to be held for the purpose of discussing the work carried on in Madrid, and the propriety of issuing a Spanish version of the Annotated Paragraph Bible.

Portugal.—The Lisbon Depot had published twenty-six works, the total number of volumes being 118,000, but the distribution was carried on with difficulty.

Other Countries.—In Germany also the increasing power of the enemies of the Gospel made it difficult for the few scattered workers to carry on their work successfully. There will be more hope for Germany when more of its pastors cease to put the Church in the place of Christ, and Church ordinances in the place of Christian work. A small number were alive to that truth, but the advocates of secularism and scepticism were numerous and active. Aid had been given to workers by the committee in proportion to what they themselves had done. A new Tract Society had been formed in Berlin, which the committee had aided. Age and infirmity having compelled Dr. Oncken to retire from active work, Dr. P. W. Bickel had succeeded him in the management of the Hamburg Tract Society, to which the committee had granted 100*l.* Many other towns in Germany, and in Holland, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and Austria, had received similar assistance, and interesting particulars are given in the report of the beneficial results. In Servia the Finance Minister, M. Myatovich, sympathised and co-operated in the work. Under his superintendence a translation of Mr. Spurgeon's sermon, "Come and Welcome," had been issued, and was much appreciated; and a second edition of "Jessica's First Prayer" and a version of "The Pilgrim's Progress" were passing through the press. In Roumania about 20,000 tracts had been circulated. In Bulgaria the people were regarded as furnishing a most inviting field for the introduction of Christian literature, as they were characterised by an intellectual activity which was encouraging. A grant of 300*l.* had been made to the American Board at Constantinople. There are now 100 Evangelical churches in the Turkish Empire, which are centres of light and influence. At the Theological College at Marash teachers were being trained for work in Asia Minor. At Athens Dr. Kalopothakes had issued fifty-three works in Greek, and over 73,000 were sold during the year. Grants of tracts and books had been made to Malta, Gibraltar, and Cyprus, and were much valued by the sick soldiers in hospital. The society's operations are not confined to Europe, but extend also to Asia. Twenty-two societies in India had been helped, besides individual missionaries, and large special grants had been made on the recommendation of Dr. Murdoch, amounting in value to 3,935*l.* The number of spoken languages in India is 243, and including dialects, 549. Translations of the Bible, or part of it, may exist in some seventy or eighty of these languages and dialects, but those which have a Christian literature are much fewer. The records of the various missionary societies show that during the past year there has been in several parts of India a remarkable movement of the people towards Christianity. In South India especially the converts and inquirers have been numbered by tens of thousands, and the committee were anxious to prepare suitable tracts and books for their instruction. The Calcutta Tract Society had issued fifty-six publications in Bengali, five in Mussulman-Bengali, two in Anglo-vernacular, and two in English. The number of copies had been 189,400, and the total circulation over 185,000. Bengali is spoken by forty millions, occupying a prominent place among the natives of India, amongst whom education is spreading, and there is a growing demand for Christian literature. Next year would be the jubilee year of the society. Dr. Wenger's New Testament Commentary had advanced as far as Philippians, and the Rev. G. H. Rouse has prepared a commentary on Isaiah. Larger grants than usual had been made to the North Indian Tract Society, but the committee had been unable to increase the grant to the Punjab Society, although the extent of its work and energy of its operations deserved all encouragement. 50,000 tracts and portions of Scripture had been printed by the Orissa Mission, and the Rev. A. J. Marshall, of Balasore, described a very remarkable movement towards Christianity at Sorah. A prominent Brahmin who visited him told him that between two and three hundred families had broken caste and wished to become Christians. The Bombay Tract Society had been granted 250*l.* for the publication of the Marathi Annotated Paragraph New Testament, and a debt of 276*l.* remitted. The Madras Tract Society had also received larger grants than usual, and its total issue during the year amounted to over 600,000, in five languages.

China.—The report of the conference of mis-

sionaries held at Shanghai in May, 1877, had been published, and contains information of the most varied and interesting character. The Rev. F. S. Baldwin stated that the first Scripture publication was a version of the Acts by Dr. Morrison in 1810, and since that time to the end of 1875 there have been published in Chinese 1,036 religious publications of all sizes, including 126 editions of the Holy Scriptures—706 in the general language and 330 in dialects. The help of the society had been given, and the plan of a version of its annotated paragraph New Testament warmly approved, and a committee had been formed for the preparation of educational works directly religious, and scientific works written on Christian principles. The committee of the society appealed for fresh means to enable them to help their brethren labouring in that vast empire, where there was but one missionary to about one million people.

Japan.—Professor Tarring had become a member of the committee at Tokio, and expressed his opinion that it was incumbent on the society to use every effort to spread religious literature widely amongst the Japanese, who read a great deal, and received tracts with politeness and eagerness. Six books and tracts in Japanese had been published by the committee during the year, the total issue being 46,250.

The report then refers to Africa, where grants of money and books have been made in many places, especially to the Rev. T. J. Comber for the Congo Mission, and to the Revs. A. Roberts and E. M. Spratt, missionaries to the Transvaal, and for distribution amongst the reinforcements sailing for Natal. The report next refers to assistance rendered to the mission cause in Madagascar and Mauritius, and then to America, Canada, Mexico, South America, West Indies, Australasia, and New Zealand.

The fact that, apart from the numerous grants made to individuals, foreign grants have been given in fifty different countries, through 130 different societies and institutions, each with its own system and channels of distribution, will illustrate the widespread character of the influence exercised by the society abroad. Its issues have exceeded those of last year by 7,500,000, a fact which testifies to its increasing influence at home. All this would, however, give but little encouragement if the committee could not at the same time make mention of testimony which they have been permitted to receive, that the work, after all so little and feeble, compared with the vast fields to be occupied, has been owned and blessed by God. They can thankfully state that such testimony is found abundantly in the pages of this report. The concurrent witness borne by those engaged in the missionary work of all Evangelical churches, in every land, to the important help received by the publications produced and circulated by the society's help would be of no light weight, even though it were given in merely general terms. It is to the facts, however, contained in the report to which the committee appeal, and which they commend to the earnest attention of those into whose hands it may come.

The noble CHAIRMAN said with such a bill of fare before them what was he to do? His own opinion was that the chairman should sit in the chair and do nothing at all but that. But as he had been asked to speak on the report his whole heart rose to the support of it. He was very much struck indeed with it, as he had been with all the reports issued by the society, and he thanked God that it had been called into existence. What could they do without it? Look at popular literature, and the immense efforts made in various quarters for the dissemination of a literature most insidious and attractive, and yet the most deceptive that was ever composed by the hand of man. He had long been acquainted with it. He had occasion to look into it at one time, and he was struck by the singular beauty of the composition and the art with which the ideas were conveyed to the mind so that many a young woman might read it several times over before she discovered the poison in it. These publications were written with so much artfulness and care that he defied any lawyer that ever was, or ever would be, to draw an Act of Parliament which should put them down. They must be put down by public opinion and by the Religious Tract Society. They had instituted a paper called the *Boy's Own Paper*, and a more sagacious or wiser production he had never read. It was the thing of things, and it was done with a degree of penetration and knowledge of boys' character that was most admirable, and for which they ought to be most thankful to Almighty God. He knew that the boys liked it, for when he told his grandson he should take it in, he seemed to think that he had risen several degrees higher in the world. He remembered a case some few years ago in which two boys of twelve and thirteen years of age broke into a house and plundered it, and nearly murdered the old lady in it. Those two boys were tried, and convicted, and sentenced to long periods of imprisonment. He was so much struck with the circumstances of the case that he hunted out the father of the lads, who lived in an alley in Holborn, and he asked him what induced those boys to undertake such a crime as that, and he assured him that those lads had been educated with the utmost care, and brought up with religious sentiments by himself and their mother, and better boys never existed until a certain paper got into their possession—a paper in which the worst crimes and greatest deeds of violence were so illustrated and put in such language that every crime assumed a heroic and chivalrous character. The boys could not with-

stand it, and were determined to emulate those criminals. Unless that kind of thing could be counteracted a large proportion of the juvenile population would grow up to be the curse of the country. He was astonished at the diversity of the society's operations. The difficulties they had to contend with were enormous, and far more difficult than what the adversary had to contend against. They had first to overcome the repugnance, and then to cultivate the taste; but he believed that if they went on they would prevail and effect a mighty change. He had never read anything so interesting as the report which had been sent him. It was full of some of the best stories he had ever read, and was of great value to persons who had to appear on public platforms. He did not know that he could say much more than he had said in praise of the society. Mr. McAll was working in the great city of Paris. As to the distribution of tracts in that city, he was there at the time of the Exhibition, and he watched the giving of tracts, and it was remarkable the simplicity and reverential air with which the people accepted them, and he only heard of two cases in which they were destroyed; but he had many instances where they were sent forth by post to others. That distribution was of the greatest consequence, and they were seriously affecting the moral state of the world. No doubt there was a great movement going on in France which would be of great value. He thanked God that that society had been called to so great an object, and that it had discharged its duty so well. In conclusion the noble Earl advised the society, which stood forth for the defence of the great orthodox principles of Christianity, not to give way and make concessions on the one side or on the other, but stand stiffly to the Christian truth. He trusted there would never be wanted a succession of men to represent the present committee and the present principles of the Religious Tract Society. (Cheers.)

The Rev. F. F. Goe, in moving the adoption of the report, said it was such a grand report that it seemed unnecessary to say anything in support of it, but he felt it a privilege and an honour to move its adoption, because of his early love for the works issued by the society—such as "Old Humphrey's Observations," "The Manners and Customs of the Jews," "The Companion to the Bible," books for which he thanked God now. Looking at those volumes and at others now issued by the society he perceived a wonderful difference, but the difference was only in externals and not in essentials, and he wished they could always see the distinction between them. Although the publications now came out in sumptuous covers, the same old truths were found inside as were in the old books issued forty years ago. He was not aware that the committee had budged an inch since they were established. When old principles were called in question they found the society went on its way proclaiming the Gospel in all its simplicity and power—for that they thanked God and took courage. No part of the society's work was more remarkable than the progress it had made in mission work, which was not at first contemplated by it. When they looked at the great missionary societies they found the Religious Tract Society hovering around them and following them wherever they went, much as a sea-bird follows in the wake of some gallant vessel, with only the difference that the birds follow for what they can get, but the society for what it can give. What was the great object of Christian missions? If they looked at it in its modern phase the object was to evangelise and educate the heathen, and form and build up native churches. In all these respects they found the Religious Tract Society rendered great assistance. What could be a more important pioneer than a reasonable striking tract which presented in a popular form the great truths of man's ruin by the fall, regeneration by the Holy Spirit, and salvation by Christ? A tract was like the spirit-stirring call of a trumpet, and missionaries had always felt that a striking tract was good to place in the hands of the heathen to awaken expectation and desire. He had been struck by the help afforded by the society in the publication of that good old book, Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress." What a wonderful testimony it was to that book that it had been found to be as popular in other countries as in our own, and that it was read more now than 200 years ago. A missionary in the Punjab was preaching, and a man stood up and said, "I have heard that story before," and he went into his shop and brought out a copy of the "Pilgrim's Progress," which had been given him, and which he had read to the people about him. The speaker then referred to China, and the assistance rendered by the society to missionary work in that country. Remembering the extent and magnitude of its operations, let all try to make more efforts to give it their best pecuniary support.

The Rev. R. W. DODDS (of Mr. McAll's Paris Mission) said he felt he had a peculiar right to speak of that society, for, humanly speaking, if it had not been for its publications, a great part of the work done in Paris by Mr. McAll's mission would not have been done. About seven years ago an English Congregational minister was about to depart by train, when he thought it would be well to take a few tracts with him, and he rushed to the depot and got some. Mr. McAll left London with his tracts, and when he arrived in Paris he went out to Belleville, and began distributing them. A workman came up to him and asked if he was not a Christian minister, and said if he would come and teach them the true religion they would be glad to receive him as a man, for

they had done with the priests. That word went down deep into Mr. McAll's heart, and for seven years he had gone in and out amongst them. He had gained the hearts of all the ministers around him, and many of the laymen, to help him speak in the cause of Christ. He (the speaker) called that a moral triumph. He could tell of men who were once infidels now standing and preaching the Gospel of Christ before their fellow citizens. A little tract did it all in leading Mr. McAll to leave England and engage in that work, and now his hymns were on the lips of thousands of *ouvriers*, and his name engraved upon the hearts of many more. The French *ouvriers* were very susceptible to the Gospel of Christ, and he had seen them deeply moved as "the old, old story" was told them. Not many years ago it might have been said of them "No Christ, no God, no hereafter." Now the people were ready to hear the Gospel, and only on one occasion in his experience had a tract been refused. They were longing to hear the Word of Life, and were awaking to the conviction that the Roman Catholic religion would not do any longer, and that what was needed was some simple heart-reaching truth. That truth was being preached in twenty-two rooms in Paris, and a new station had been opened at Lyons. The French often passed as very superficial, but were only so until their hearts were reached. They had a good instrument to reach it with in the Gospel, and it had been reached. They were seeking for the truth, and would not Christians seize the wonderful opportunity now afforded? Their mission had been closely connected with that society. They needed tracts of different kinds for all classes of society, and he was glad to know that they would have something done in that direction, and he hoped that the whole of France would be evangelised by means of itinerant tract distributors. The tract must often pioneer the Bible. Let it be attractive and preach the love of Christ and they would succeed. (Cheers.)

The resolution having been adopted, the meeting was addressed by

The Rev. Dr. SINCLAIR PATERSON on the "Influence of Literature on Social Life." The subject was, he said, somewhat peculiar and difficult. What had they as Christian men to do either with literature or social life? Was it not their purpose to bring men to the Lord Jesus Christ? He knew of no way into the holiest of all but through the rent veil, and only one power for Christian service in fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ, and one weapon for overcoming evil—the sword of the Spirit, which was the Word of God. But making those admissions he was bound to deal with the weakness and wants of the world for the promotion of men's good. They were to please every man his neighbour to his edification, and they were attempting to do that when they were endeavouring to supply men with a good literature instead of a bad literature. Some people were so excessively spiritual that they would not touch anything that lay outside the boards of the New Testament. He had not learnt that lesson of the Lord Jesus Christ, who dealt with man by dealing with things with which they were most familiar. And if they supplied the things which were needed they were preparing them for listening to such testimony as they had to give respecting the Gospel. A good deal might be accomplished in that direction, as was evidenced by the success of the *Boy's Own Paper*. The influence of literature upon men's lives was very great. There had been times when literature had only held the mirror up to nature, and times when authors had simply reflected the human character. But it was not so now. One characteristic of the age was that men of genius knew it was their duty to influence, and were not slack to use their power. They were not led, but leading and endeavouring to impress their thoughts upon those around them. Novels were written with a purpose, and men sought to assist some cause or to establish some hope reigning in their own heart. There was an earnestness in the present age which was characteristic of its literature. But it might be used for evil, and such books were to be found in the drawing-rooms as well as in the dens of the metropolis. The worst literature was read by the upper and middle classes as much as by the lower classes. They had to counteract that, and the *Sunday at Home*, the *Leisure Hour*, and numerous other publications of that society, edified and amused the mind. They must attend to the minds of men as well as to their bodies, and when they did it in the Lord's name for the Lord's sake they were serving God in their generation.

The Earl of Shaftesbury being too unwell to remain then vacated the chair, which was taken by Sir William Muir.

The Rev. H. W. WEBB-PEPLOE, B.A., then spoke on the results of direct and indirect tract distribution.

The Rev. J. P. CHOWN followed with an address on Boy Literature, and, referring to the *Boy's Own Paper*, said he thought the society had done a noble thing in entering upon that great and promising enterprise. Remembering the spread of education in the present day, a spirit of inquiry would be awakened which would be either a great blessing or a great curse. Some of the worst things in the world were the best things spoiled. The spread of education, in which they had taken an active part, laid upon them a responsibility, and they must turn that wondrous power into proper channels, or they might find it increase the difficulties of the Christian Church. The ground had been partly occupied by the publications now issuing from the press, which were brought within the reach of the poorest

boys, and were rendered attractive by the engravings, tales, and general character of the contents. There was a call upon their utmost power to supersede such publications, and he thanked the Religious Tract Society in the interest of the Christian Church, as well as in the interest of the boys of England, for their noble enterprise. He rejoiced that it had been undertaken by that society, for it gave him the assurance of its ability and moral influence. He rejoiced that it was under the conduct of the editor of the *Leisure Hour*. Some young critics between the ages of eight and fifteen, with whom he was acquainted, had expressed their opinion that the *Boy's Own Paper* was "jolly," and "the best thing out," and he found there was a wonderful concurrence of opinion about it. It was adapted to the wants of the boys, and he prayed that it might abundantly answer the purpose for which it was designed. (Cheers.)

The proceedings were then closed with singing and the benediction.

SUNDAY SCHOOL UNION.

The seventy-sixth anniversary of this institution was held at Exeter Hall on Thursday evening, the chair being taken by Sir Thomas Chambers, M.P., in the absence of Sir Robert Lush, who was unable to be present. There was, as usual, a vast gathering of the teachers and friends of the Union. The platform was crowded by ministers and laymen of all denominations.

Mr. BENHAM read the report, which first dealt with the Continental work of the Union, and then with the colonial operations. At home 35 grants, amounting to 2797, had been made to schools. There were now in connection with the Union:—Thirteen metropolitan auxiliaries, 833 schools, 20,068 teachers, 231,791 scholars; 198 local unions, 3,528 schools, 85,971 teachers, 732,973 scholars; making a total of 4,361 schools, 106,039 teachers, 964,764 scholars; showing an increase of 108 schools, 2,252 teachers, 13,575 scholars. It was further stated that 2,479 scholars in London, and 10,607 in the country, a total of 13,086, had become members during the year. The year 1880 being the hundredth anniversary of the establishment of the Sunday-school system in this country by Robert Raikes, the committee had resolved to adopt measures for celebrating the occasion in such a way as shall permanently benefit the Sunday-school cause. Arrangements are in progress for holding a universal convention at the end of June, 1880, to which delegates have been invited from all parts of the world. It was hoped that the statue of Robert Raikes, which is entrusted to Mr. Thomas Brock, will be ready to form a part of the centenary celebration in June, 1880. The Recorder of London, Sir Thomas Chambers, has accepted the presidency for the next year.

Sir THOMAS CHAMBERS said that that institution increased in importance as time went on. All that Sir Charles Reed and the School Board were doing would not do the work which Sunday-schools were doing so admirably. When such schools were first started they had to commence at the beginning of all elementary knowledge, but to-day they had only to begin at the beginning of religious knowledge. The Sunday-school work in London, with its vast population of over 3,500,000, was one of the most important agencies at work to stop iniquity and crime, and there was a vast field of labour which the Sunday-schools now earnestly and most profitably occupied.

The Rev. J. GUINNESS ROGERS, B.A., moved, and the Rev. Dr. EDMOND seconded, the following resolution, which was carried unanimously:—

That this meeting, gratefully recognising the inestimable benefits conferred by the Sunday-school Institution on English-speaking nations, heartily approves of the proposed celebration of the centenary of Sunday-schools in the year 1880, and of the erection of a statue to the memory of Robert Raikes in connection therewith.

The Rev. Canon HUSSEY moved:—

That the steady though gradual extension of Sunday-schools in Holland, France, Germany, Spain, Italy, and other parts of the continent of Europe, calls for devout thankfulness on the part of all friends of Evangelical truth. At the same time, this meeting would call earnest attention to the serious falling off in the contributions received for the Continental missions of the Union during the past year; a deficiency which must inevitably result in the withdrawal of one or more of the missionaries now employed, unless the means placed at the disposal of the committee are promptly and largely increased.

The Rev. Dr. MANNING seconded the proposal, which was carried, as was the following on the motion of the Rev. Dr. PARKER, seconded by the Rev. W. CUTHERBERTSON, B.A.:—

That while rejoicing in the rapid increase of pure literature for juvenile readers, which has been apparent during the past few years, this meeting would emphatically impress upon Sunday-school teachers and all who are engaged in the education of youth, the desirability of seeking to secure a widely augmented circulation for the monthly periodicals of the Union.

The proceedings closed with a cordial vote of thanks to Sir Thomas Chambers for presiding.

THE UNITED PRESBYTERIANS.—At the meeting of the synod of this body at Edinburgh on Thursday, Professor John Cairns was unanimously elected Principal of the Theological Hall of the Church. In response to an invitation by the Established Church for union, the synod decided unanimously that union was not possible on the lines of recognition of State control.

THE PEACE SOCIETY AND THE ZULU WAR.

We are requested to publish the following address from the committee of the Peace Society to their countrymen:—

"Countrymen.—Is it not time that public opinion should demand that the bloody and disastrous war in South Africa should be brought to a speedy end? It is a war undertaken, not only without the consent, but against the express wishes and warnings of the Government at home. It is impossible to deny that it is a purely aggressive war. No one pretends that the Zulu King had invaded or attacked British territory or possessions, nor is there a thread of authentic evidence to prove that he intended to do so; while there stands on record the unquestionable fact that for the fourteen or fifteen years he has exercised supreme authority in his own country he has dwelt in peace on our borders, and at our instance abstained even from vindicating his own rights, by force of arms, against the persistent and unjust encroachments of the Boers. 'The relations of the English and Zulus,' says Sir Henry Bulwer on the 8th of December, 1877, 'have always been friendly.' The war has already cost probably 2,000 British lives, and has carried anguish and desolation into hundreds of British homes. It has occasioned the destruction, as is alleged, of several thousands of Zulus who were guilty of no offence but defending their own country against an unprovoked invasion. If the war is continued, no one can estimate the sacrifice of human life to which it may lead, and it is shocking to contemplate the atrocities which may be committed on both sides as they become more and more inflamed by mutual hatred and revenge. There is every indication that the war, if unchecked, will take wider proportions every day. Immediately after the arrival of the large reinforcements sent from this country there is a demand for more men and more supplies. The expenditure is growing at so prodigious a rate that the lowest calculation of cost which comes from the colony is ten millions sterling. Ominous signs are not wanting of moodiness and discontent among other tribes, while the attitude of the Transvaal Boers is far from reassuring. And what is the prospect before us? Even if the war prove entirely successful in a material sense, if Cetewayo be defeated and his army dispersed, if his people are exterminated or driven out, and their country confiscated, what will ensue? Why, that we shall be brought into contact with other tribes whose suspicion and hostility will have been sharpened against us by their knowledge of the fate of the Zulus; and beyond them there will be still other tribes actuated by the same feelings, thus opening before us a succession of interminable wars of most ignoble character in remote and barbarous regions, where, instead of being pioneers of civilisation and Christianity, our march will be tracked with desolation and blood. The policy of aggression and of fighting to the bitter end is supported with clamorous violence by those among the colonists who covet the land of the Zulus, and who profit so enormously by the expenditure which the war occasions. But the cost in blood, in treasure, in character, falls upon you, countrymen; and it is for you to decide whether you are prepared by your voice to perpetuate indefinitely the hideous and purposeless butchery of human beings now going on in South Africa. It is believed that the King of the Zulus has made more than one peaceable overture to the British authorities which have hitherto been repelled. But we call upon you, countrymen, in the name of justice and humanity, to interpose your veto against prolonging this war for one day for purposes of revenge or military prestige or territorial conquest and annexation. There is more involved in this matter than the pecuniary sacrifice before us, though they threaten to be formidable; more even than the fearful havoc on human life and happiness which the war will entail. It concerns the reputation of England as a Christian nation before the face of the world; and it surely behoves us to consider whether by persevering for the gratification of national pride in a policy of violence and blood we may not come into conflict with a Power mightier than our own, against which no nation ever hardened itself and finally prospered."

CEMETERY CHAPELS.

The following letter, from Mr. J. Carvell Williams, has appeared in the *Daily News*:—

"The correspondence between the Burslem Town Council and the Bishop of Lichfield relative to the erection of a chapel in their new cemetery—to which you have already made reference—deserves more attention than it has yet received, on the ground that the positions taken by the council and the bishop respectively mark new points of departure in the history of the Burial question, so far as concerns cemeteries under the Burial Acts. The Burslem Town Council, acting as a burial board, are of the same opinion as Mr. Cross, the Home Secretary, who, in the debate on the Consecration of Churchyards Bill, said that 'he never passed a cemetery anywhere without feeling the deepest possible regret that in this Christian country we are obliged to have three chapels in every public ground.' As, however, they believed that the obligation was not a legal one, they memorialised the Bishop of Lichfield to induce him to consecrate a portion of the new cemetery, without requiring that the one chapel which they proposed to erect should be consecrated also. They maintained that the obligation to erect several chapels where one is suffi-

cient for the public wants inflicts a needless burden on the ratepayers, and that the dedication of a chapel to the exclusive use of one section of the community is unjust. They also expressed the opinion that it would be easy to make such arrangements as would prevent all inconvenience in the joint use of a single chapel by all parties.

"The bishop discussed the question with a deputation in February, and then expressed a hope that the Town Council would reconsider the matter, and determine upon separate chapels. They complied with the episcopal request so far as regards reconsideration, but decided to adhere to their request; and it is his lordship's reply, which has just been made public, that the public have now to consider.

"Both the spirit and the phraseology of the reply are unobjectionable; but its substance is, I venture to think, altogether unsatisfactory. The bishop wishes to show kindly consideration to his Nonconformist neighbours, but finds himself 'unable to comply' with the request to sanction the erection of one chapel, to be used by Churchmen and Nonconformists alike. He, however, suggests a plan which he thinks will—on both financial and religious grounds—more fully attain the object of the council than their own. It is 'to dispense with the erection of a chapel altogether, and to authorise the clergy in the neighbourhood to perform in their own churches that part of the service which is usually read in a cemetery chapel; leaving the various Nonconformist bodies to make a similar arrangement, or any other which they may prefer.' That method, he thinks, will both save the ratepayers' money, and afford equal or greater security 'against the manifestation of religious discord.'

"This has a very specious look; but practically the bishop's plan amounts to the abolition of burial services under cover, and a compulsion to have the whole of the service in the open air. For, besides that many persons using unconsecrated ground have no claim to use Nonconformist chapels for funeral purposes, does anybody suppose that mourners would submit to the inconvenience of having to go to one part of a town for a portion of the service and then to a cemetery outside the town to complete it? And, if they were willing, why should they be compelled to resort to such an arrangement, instead of adhering to the present plan of having a chapel in the cemetery itself?

"That question the bishop hardly attempts to answer. He does not state that there are legal difficulties in the way, but only combats the arguments of the Town Council, stating, among other things, that to him it seems no more painful to see two chapels side by side in a cemetery than to see them in the same position in a street! The public should therefore understand that, in the opinion of the new Bishop of Lichfield, it is better that Englishmen should do without cemetery chapels altogether than that Dissenters should be allowed to use the same building as Churchmen! Either two chapels or no chapel at all! that is his lordship's ultimatum, which he offers with an evident belief that he displays great liberality in doing so. The Burslem Town Council have not been convinced by the bishop's logic; but have resolved so far to act on his suggestion as to defer for a time the building of a chapel, in the hope that a change of the law will remove the existing obstacle to the fulfilment of their wishes. That decision has, at least, the advantage of keeping the question open, and the result of delay will, I have no doubt, be to show that the monopoly for which the bishop really contends is as objectionable in the eyes of the laity as it appears to be precious in those of the Established clergy."

ECCLESIASTICAL MISCELLANY.

The hearing of the Miles Platting ritual case, which was fixed for Saturday last by Lord Penzance, has been adjourned by mutual consent to the 7th June.

ADULT BAPTISM IN A CHURCH.—Nearly twenty grown persons, men and women, were publicly baptized on Sunday evening in Kensington parish church, in the presence of an immense congregation. The vicar, the Hon. and Rev. E. Carr Glyn, administered the sacrament after the second lesson, Alford's well-known baptismal hymn having been previously sung, and subsequently preached a short sermon. The service was not over till nearly nine o'clock.

THE FRENCH PROTESTANTS AND PRESIDENT GREVY.—The Paris correspondent of the *Daily News* says:—"The Presidents of the Protestant Consistories assembled in Paris having waited on the President of the Republic to protest against two appointments of professors by M. Jules Ferry, M. Grévy courteously replied—'I thank you for your visit. You are wrong to be alarmed about the intentions of the Government. What feeling of hostility can it possibly entertain against Protestantism? I consider the Protestant Church as the mother of Democracy in modern times. If the Government thought of infringing the independence and dignity of any church, which it certainly does not, the Reformed Church would be the last whose liberty it would seek to restrain. The particular act you speak of was considered at a Ministerial Council and unanimously held to be legal. I will have the question re-examined, and if you think the law violated you have your appeal to the Council of State. Don't hesitate about that. We are not susceptible, and only desire the strict execution of the law.' A delegate having asked whether the Government would authorize the meeting of a

synod, the President replied that a synod would be convoked whenever all the groups of the French Protestants called for one. The *Français* construes this answer as tantamount to a refusal."

Religious and Denominational News.

Meetings are being held in the provincial towns on behalf of the Wesleyan Thanksgiving Fund. At Halifax a few days ago 4,000*l.* was realised. No doubt is entertained that more than a quarter of a million will be raised.

THE MERCHANTS' LECTURE is being delivered this month at the Weigh House Chapel, Fish-street-hill, by the Rev. J. Baldwin Brown, B.A. The first discourse yesterday was on "The Life of Great Cities, especially London." The second will be on Tuesday next, May 20, when Mr. Brown's subject will be, "The Social and Moral Problems which the life of great cities sets us to solve." The lectures are free, and commence each day at twelve o'clock.

WYCLIFFE CHAPEL.—The bazaar opened in the Wycliffe New Sunday-school building on the 29th ult., by T. Scrutton, Esq., was so well attended, and so generously encouraged, that it was thought desirable to keep it open a day longer than was at first intended. The building was generally crowded during the evenings of the four days, and the result was a sum of 650*l.* (minus some small expenses) towards the reduction of debt still remaining on the new schools. This was beyond the expectations of the most sanguine.

OPEN-AIR PREACHING IN HYDE PARK.—On Sunday afternoon a protracted meeting was convened in Hyde Park by the West London Branch of the Open Air Mission. The weather was wet, but the meeting was continued six hours and a-half. During that time more than twenty preachers spoke, including the Rev. Neville Sherbrooke, Mr. Thomas Blake, M.P., Dr. Kirby, General Syng, Major Nolan, Colonel Puget, Mr. T. A. Denny, Mr. Edward Trotter, Mr. Thomas Boyd, Mr. Gavin Kirkham, Mr. Faulkner, and others.

THE BAILHACHE MEMORIAL FUND.—Our readers will see by the appeal from the committee of this fund, that the widow of the late highly-esteemed secretary of the Baptist Missionary Society, has declined to accept the grant of five hundred pounds voted at the annual members' meeting recently held. This sum was to have formed part of two thousand pounds which the memorial committee were endeavouring to raise at the least, as a provision for Mrs. Bailhache and her children, but she has objections to receiving it from the funds of the society, and we do not doubt that so rare an act of self-denial will meet with due consideration by those to whom the committee now appeal. The fund, we understand, is several hundred pounds short of the contemplated amount.

CAMBERWELL NEW-ROAD.—The church and congregation of Camberwell New-road Chapel assembled on Tuesday evening, April 29, to celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of their pastor, the Rev. W. P. Tiddy. The Rev. Paul J. Turquand, of York-street Chapel, Walworth, presided. Mr. Cole, one of the deacons, gave a history of the church, which had been originated twenty-five years before by Mr. Tiddy, and with many affectionate congratulations handed him a cheque for 100 guineas, as an expression of their high regard. The Rev. D. A. Herschell, of Brixton, then spoke, and after alluding to the variety of services which Mr. Tiddy had been able to render to the cause of God and to his brethren in the ministry, especially as secretary of the Widows' Fund, said that he and Mr. Turquand had collected 153*l.*, which he begged him to accept as an expression of fraternal esteem. Mr. Tiddy thanked most heartily all who had joined in these testimonies. Kind letters were read from the Revs. Dr. Clemence, C. Stanford, A. Hannay, and others, regretting their inability to attend. Cordial addresses were delivered by the Revs. B. Price, I. Doxsey, J. Jacob, Mr. Hooper, and others.

PASTOR'S COLLEGE, METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE.—A meeting in aid of the funds of this institution was held on Wednesday in the new college buildings at the back of the Tabernacle, Newington Butts, when a tea and supper were given by Mr. T. R. Phillips to a large company. Mr. Thomas A. Denny presided. Mr. Spurgeon, in giving an account of the work of the college, said that in the admission of students they did not look for very much education in the men who were taken when they first came, but since the early days of the college the standard of the men entering had risen, and the standard of the teaching had been raised correspondingly. In other denominations there had been complaints of want of young men for the ministry, while at the present moment there were seventy-five applicants for admission to their institution. Not more than twenty, however, could be taken at present, as that number would make up the full complement of 100 students. They did not seek to make preachers, but to make those who were already preachers more efficient, and to enable them to cultivate the faculty of ready speech. Coming to statistics, Mr. Spurgeon stated that 458 students had been settled as pastors or missionaries, and four were studying as medical missionaries. Of these, 292 had furnished returns this year. They reported a total membership of 39,308, and since the past conference had baptized 3,544 persons, and added to their churches a total of 5,882, showing a clear increase of 3,124 for the year, or rather more than ten per church. During the four

teen years in which statistics had been collected 36,000 persons had been baptized by ministers from the college ; 54,000 altogether had been added to their churches, and the clear increase had been 33,282. Many of the ministers, however, did not report, so that these figures were below the true total. Speaking of the means by which the funds required for the maintenance of the college were obtained, Mr. Spurgeon said that more than one-third of the income was generally given at the supper on these occasions, one-third was given by friends at the Tabernacle—last year they gave £1,878.—and the other third had to be made up during the year. There was £167. remaining in hand, a sum equal to about a week's expenses. In conclusion, he mentioned the needs of the colportage and the orphanage, and expressed a hope that any who had not suffered a diminution of income from the prevailing depression of trade would give liberally that night towards the college fund. Addresses were delivered by several speakers, among whom were Mr. M'Arthur, M.P., Mr. Thomas Blake, M.P., and Mr. Spurgeon's two sons. After supper subscriptions were announced which, including sums of £100. given by the chairman and by several members of the congregation, amounted to over £1,900.—the largest sum, Mr. Spurgeon said, ever subscribed at the annual supper.

PRESNTATION TO MR. SPURGEON.—At a crowded public meeting in the Metropolitan Tabernacle, on Thursday evening, held in continuance of the Pastor's College annual conference, the Rev. Professor Gracey, one of the tutors, on behalf of the nearly 500 past and present students, presented to Mr. Spurgeon the sum of £147., subscribed as a token of the love and appreciation of his past twenty-five years' ministry. In acknowledging the gift, Mr. Spurgeon expressed his sympathy with Lord Chelmsford, in his broken speech to the men at Rorke's Drift. When a man was in his position, and saw his followers who had done such splendid deeds, it choked him. He thought all the better of him. If his lordship had made a great speech he would have been a fool and not a man. So he (Mr. Spurgeon) could not talk of the affection of his people, but only keep on doing as he had, and better if he could. He received the testimonial simply to give it away to the various organisations of the Tabernacle. He would refuse to take one farthing for himself. He used to have no end of enemies. Whether they were all dead he did not know, but they were much quieter than they used to be. And here were his friends of the Church of England. Did he ever refuse to speak all he thought about them? And yet one of the first things he received in the course of his illness was a letter from the bishop of the diocese to express his extreme sorrow ; a letter and book from the Dean of Chester ; and another letter from Archdeacon Law, of Gloucester ; also another from a very High Churchman, whose name he would not mention, because he was so dreadfully High—all expressive of deep love to him. It seemed strange to him that such a grumpy individual as himself, and one who could grumble so very loudly, should be treated so kindly. He began to fear he must have been doing something wrong, and he began to question his conscience, but on the whole he could not remember unfaithfulness in his utterances. He rejoiced in the conduct of the brethren concerned, and returned all their affection. Whenever anybody sang his praises he sank to the very lowest in spirits directly, but on his being abused up went his spirits, and he defied the very devil himself when it came to a fight. The Rev. C. A. Davis, of Bradford, a former student, in the name of the others, wished for Mr. Spurgeon that every hair of his head might be a wax candle to light him to glory, and might he be in heaven ten minutes before the devil knew he was there. Addresses followed by the Revs. W. Hamilton, W. Usher, and others, and the ministers afterwards partook of their annual supper at the Tabernacle.—The committee of the Spurgeon bazaar testimonial have made arrangements for the formal presentation to the rev. gentleman on the evening of Tuesday next, the 20th inst. The ceremony will take place at a public meeting in the Metropolitan Tabernacle, and a paper will be read thereat giving a review of Mr. Spurgeon's twenty-five years' pastorate in connection with the Tabernacle. On the preceding evening a tea meeting will be held at the Tabernacle, after which there will be a service of praise and thanksgiving in connection with the event.

SOUTHAMPTON.—Henry Lee, Esq., J.P., one of the Liberal candidates for the borough of Southampton, laid on May 1 the memorial-stone of new class-rooms about to be added, at a cost of £350., to the school premises attached to Northam Chapel, Southampton. The Rev. G. W. F. Gregg, in course of the proceedings, mentioned that the communion table in Chester Cathedral was made of three different kinds of wood—terebinth, olive, and cedar—brought from the Holy Land by Mr. Lee, and presented by him for the purpose. Mr. Lee, in urging the claims of religious education in Sunday-schools, mentioned that he had under his control a school of over 600, the children of his workpeople ; at the last Government examination they succeeded in passing 97 per cent. of those in attendance at the school ; 99 per cent. passed in reading and writing. Although the schoolmaster might have the future of England in his hands, what the character of that future was to be was in the hands of the Church. (Hear.) He used the word Church in the broadest sense, including in the term every denomination which taught the truth as it was made known in the Word of God, and he said that the future was in its hands,

because he believed that religion was the true basis on which character could be built up. (Hear, hear.) Religion was that which affected the conscience, and the quicker conscience acted in the mind of any man, the more likely was that man to do his duty by those who were around him. The Sunday-school, above all other places, was the one not encumbered by forms and creeds, and we could there sit down and try to indoctrinate our young with those simple truths which go to make up their character, and that having been done, they will in after life form their own ideas upon those higher subjects which, in his opinion, he thought it unnecessary they should be troubled with as children. (Hear.) They might ask him what was to be the text-book of their teaching? The only one he knew was the Bible, where he found everything he needed ; it was the storehouse from which they might obtain the most valuable lessons, and the more they familiarised the minds of the children with its contents the more would they act the part of workmen who were building in the proper way. He was not one of those who looked upon the future with gloomy anticipations. There were as bright days in store for England as there had been in the past—(cheers)—and our aim should be to so work that when these days did come we should be able to say we had had some share in bringing them about by doing all we could to exercise our influence over the rising race. (Cheers.) The Chairman then moved a vote of thanks to Mr. Lee for his attendance. Mr. T. Falvey, in seconding the resolution, said Mr. Lee was constantly performing similar acts of kindness, not only in his own neighbourhood, but in many parts of the country. The motion was carried by acclamation.

MR. HARLEY'S IRON HALL AT MILL HILL.

On Saturday, a distinguished party, headed by Earl Stanhope, including Mr. Serjeant Cox, the Chief Justice of South Australia, Mr. Thomas Scrutton, the Rev. G. M. Murphy, Mr. James Clarke, of the *Christian World*, Mr. Carvell Williams, and others, met at Mill Hill to assist at the opening of an iron hall which will accommodate about a couple of hundred persons, and which has been erected at an expense of about £200. by the Rev. Robert Harley, Vice-Principal of the Grammar School, for the benefit of the inhabitants of that district. Professor Jevons also had promised to attend, and so had Mr. William Spottiswoode, President of the Royal Society, but he was detained in town by attendance on the Prince of Wales. The noble lord having taken the chair, expressed his sympathy with the objects for which that hall was built, and dwelt on the intellectual character of the age, as shown in the improved character of the literature of our day, and in the increased grants made by Parliament for educational purposes. He had a great idea of the benefits to be derived from village clubs. In his own neighbourhood in Kent they had established one, which had been found to be very useful, and where considerable attention had been paid to the study of music—a study which he hoped would not be overlooked in that hall. His lordship having expressed his good wishes for the success of the hall, then declared it open. The Rev. Robert Harley explained the circumstances under which the building of the hall had originated. They really did require accommodation for popular lectures and temperance meetings and gatherings of a similar character. The hall was not intended as a rival to any existing institution in the place unless it was the public-house. It was to be unsectarian in its character, and would be placed in trust for the benefit of the villagers. It was erected at his own expense because he was too busy to run about soliciting subscriptions. One lady, it was true, had generously presented him with the sum of £50. ; he would not name her. All he could say was that she had been his most faithful friend and companion for a period of twenty-five years. Mr. Serjeant Cox then came forward to move a vote of thanks to Mr. Harley for his generosity and public spirit, and expressed his sympathy with Mr. Harley in his aims and aspirations. As a magistrate and judge he had daily to see the dreadful effects of intemperance, and it was his belief that the village club was the best antidote to the public-house. They all liked clubs ; the rich man left his luxurious home for his club, and if it was a necessity for him, much more was it needed by the working men. There had been many efforts to supply such a want. There was the Mechanics' Institution, with the origin of which he, in connection with Lord Brougham, had much to do, and then there were the penny readings which he had suggested to Professor Plumtree, and which he had tried first in connection with his own family circle, where he had found them to be very successful. He (Serjeant Cox) was glad Mr. Harley had not forgotten to make provision for the amusement of the people where they could have their chat, and their cup of tea or coffee, and where all classes could meet together. He had some experience of such meetings, and could speak of their beneficial influence, and it was pleasing to see how the lowest were moved to laughter, or to tears, by such readings as were to be given in the new hall. Mr. Thomas Scrutton hoped that the boys would not be forgotten, as it was quite as desirable that they should be thought of as their seniors, and they especially wanted such places where they might go of an evening. Earl Stanhope had referred to the increased sum now voted by Parliament for national education. It was the best way in which money could be spent, and he trusted that soon the grant would be four millions of pounds instead of two. At

present the money was doing much good. The other day a case came before him in which an indenture of apprenticeship was to be signed by five boys, who could all write their names, but when it came to their fathers the latter had to make their marks, and thus they were raising an educated race of workmen. Next November he was coming before many of the gentlemen there present to be re-elected for the London School Board, and he hoped that they would all appreciate and support the work the Board had done. After a few words from the Lord Chief Justice of South Australia, Mr. McAndrew, thanking the noble lord for his attendance, which his lordship suitably acknowledged, the meeting separated after singing the national anthem.

Epitome of News.

The Queen and Court remain at Windsor, and are likely to leave for Balmoral on the 21st inst.

Sir Augustus Paget has been directed to express to the Italian Government the Queen's acknowledgments of the manner in which Her Majesty was received at Baveno.

Her Majesty held two Drawing-rooms at Buckingham Palace last week, and returned to Windsor on Friday evening.

The Governors of University College, London, have elected the Earl of Kimberley to the presidency of the college, in succession to Lord Belper, resigned. Lord Kimberley has for some years served as vice-president, and is succeeded in that office by Mr. Justice Fry, who was formerly an examiner in equity and real property in the University of London and a member of the Council of Legal Education.

The proposed banquet to Mr. Gladstone has not, it is stated, been abandoned, but only postponed to a more convenient opportunity. The committee, of which Mr. S. Morley, M.P., is the chairman, have laid the matter before Mr. Gladstone, who has expressed his willingness to accept the invitation, and it is expected that one of Mr. Gladstone's colleagues in the late Cabinet will preside on the occasion.

The erection of a granite cross in memory of the late Princess Alice is almost finished at Balmoral. It stands about ten feet high, and is situated in the grounds to the north-west of the Castle.

The executive of the Greek Committee have issued an address, signed by Lord Rosebery, Sir Charles Dilke, Mr. G. Shaw-Lefevre, M.P., and Mr. Lewis Sergeant, calling attention to the claims of Greece upon Europe, and urging the public to press upon the Government the duty of demanding the fulfilment by Turkey of the cession of territory agreed to by the Porte in the thirteenth protocol of the Treaty of Berlin.

In the iron trade there is no improvement. Of 165 blast furnaces in the north of England, it is stated that only fifty-two are at present in operation.

Lord Rosebery presided on Saturday at the annual dinner of the Newspaper Press Fund, at Willis's Rooms. Among the speakers were Lord Houghton, Cardinal Manning, Mr. Herschell, M.P., Mr. Otway, M.P., and Mr. Anthony Trollope. Subscriptions amounting to more than £1,200. were announced.

There was a large increase last month in the emigration from the Mersey. The number of passengers was nearly 11,000, being 6,000 over the March figures and 4,000 over those of April last year.

Since 1868, when the Tory candidate, Sir Graham Montgomery, was returned for Peeblesshire by the narrow majority of three, great efforts have been made to keep the seat by the creation of faggot voters. In the two counties of Peebles and Selkirk, represented by Sir Graham, cut of 859 electors, 149 are Tory faggots. This is worse than Midlothian, where the faggots number 200 out of 2,929.

The Chatham Liberal Council of Seventy have unanimously adopted the Hon. H. C. Glyn as the Liberal candidate for that borough at the next election.

It is announced that a working men's subscription is being raised to pay the Rev. J. W. Horsley's costs in defending the action for libel brought against him by the proprietor of the Argyll Rooms.

On Saturday evening the remains of the late Mr. Isaac Butt, M.P., were interred in the churchyard at Stranorlar, County Donegal. Many Home Rule members of the House of Commons, and some of the Irish judges, were present at the funeral.

At the Metropolitan Board of Works, on Friday, a report was presented by the chief engineer and consulting chemist on the lighting of the Thames Embankment by electricity. It stated that the cost per lamp was 5*1/2*d. per hour, that the cost of gas giving the same amount of light would be 2*1/2*d. in opal globes, and 3*1/2*d. in frosted globes. The report declared that the defects connected with the electric light must prevent its adoption as a general mode of lighting.

Mr. Benjamin Armitage, president of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce, has addressed a letter to the Marquis of Salisbury asking his lordship to correct a statement made by Mr. Pouyer Quertier to the effect that the wages of cotton operatives in Lancashire had been reduced to the extent of 60 per cent. The actual reduction in the Blackburn district, which includes the principal area of the Lancashire cotton industry, does not exceed 15 per cent., and, though in some quarters the reduction has amounted to 20 per cent., his figure would be

decidedly in excess of the average reduction throughout the entire industry. Mr. Armitage considers it most desirable that an official correction should be communicated to the French Government, as fallacies of this nature may adversely influence the forthcoming treaty negotiations.

A new coffee-tavern was opened in the Buckingham Palace-road on Saturday. Lord Cairns presided, and he was supported by Mr. Cross, the Home Secretary, and Sir H. Selwin-Ibbetson. These three gentlemen all spoke very favourably of the coffee-palace movement. The Lord Chancellor urged that the company ought to strive to give the best value they could for the money, and to make no attempt to undersell their neighbour—not beginning by giving a dinner at sixpence which was worth a shilling, for that would bring to them a different class of customers from what they wished. He urged the company also to open as early in the morning as possible. If they got the working man in the morning they would be more likely to secure his return in the evening.

Mr. Robert Thompson Crawshay, the ironmaster, of Cyfarthfa Castle, Merthyr Tydfil, who was called the "Iron King of Wales," died at the Queen's Hotel, Cheltenham, on Saturday afternoon. He was the youngest son of Mr. W. Crawshay, of Caversham Park, Reading, and Cyfarthfa, and was born about 1816. When the last great strike occurred among his men Mr. Crawshay closed his ironworks, which have not since been reopened.

The "golden wreath" which is to be presented to Lord Beaconsfield when it is fully paid for was on view at a meeting of the Royal Botanic Society on Saturday evening. It is described as a "beautiful work of art."

Richmond in Yorkshire was visited on Wednesday by perhaps the most severe snowstorm experienced during the winter. Snow fell in blinding masses, and a sharp, biting wind rendered it most unpleasant.

Sir Wilfrid Lawson, M.P., laid the memorial stone on Friday of a building in the Hampstead-road which is intended as a hospital in which medical and surgical cases are to be treated without the use of alcohol. The necessity for such a building, it was stated, has arisen from the demand outgrowing the accommodation in a hospital of a similar character in Gower-street. Of 3,000*l.* required to complete the institution, about 1,000*l.* was subscribed during the ceremony, in which Mr. Jacob Bright, M.P., Mr. Whitworth, M.P., Mr. Barran, M.P., and Canon Fleming took part.

It is stated that the liquidators of the City of Glasgow Bank do not contemplate making a third call of 1,000*l.* or 3,750*l.* in all, per 100*l.* stock. They believe that the last call of 2,250*l.* per share, in addition to the previous 500*l.* will be sufficient to pay the bank's debts.

A correspondent informs the *Echo* that "on Saturday night last, at one of the principal music-halls in London, two of the most popular singers sang, or rather attempted to sing, the praises of Lord Beaconsfield; but each time the name of Dizzy was mentioned the attempt was a complete failure. The audience hissed and groaned, until the hope of the singers being heard was abandoned."

At the closing meeting of the Iron and Steel Institute on Friday, Dr. Siemens announced that he would give 10,000*l.* towards the cost of a building to be erected in Westminster as an institution for the use of associations cultivating the various branches of applied science.

Mr. J. V. Godwin having definitely declined to become a candidate for Bradford in conjunction with Mr. Forster, M.P., at the next general election, the committee of the Liberal Three Hundred have decided to ask Mr. Alfred Illingworth if he will stand for the borough.

The joint committees of masters and men, acting respectively in the strike of Durham colliers, met at Newcastle on Saturday, but came to no decision; and, after some discussion, the conference was adjourned to Wednesday.

Births, Marriages, and Deaths.

BIRTHS.

NORRIS.—May 9, at Radnor Lodge, Clifton, Mrs. John Freeman Norris, of a son.

MARRIAGES.

HIBBERD—FLACK.—May 3, at Abney Congregational Church, Stoke Newington, by the Rev. W. Spensley, Frederick Pavey, eldest son of J. Hibberd, of Gordon-road, South Hornsey, to Mary, eldest daughter of J. C. Flack, of Lordship Park, Stoke Newington.

MOON—HOLDEN.—May 7, at Cavendish-street Chapel, Manchester, by the Rev. E. Paxton Hood, John William, eldest son of Joseph Moon, Eccles, to Phoebe, second daughter of Henry Holden, Chester-road, Manchester.

PEVERLEY—THOMAS.—May 8, at the Stratford Congregational Church, by the Rev. J. W. Atkinson, William Cheever Peverley, to Elizabeth Bickford Thomas, second daughter of Mr. J. E. Thomas, Trinity Pilot, of Forest Gate.

RENDLE—FORSYTH.—May 8, at the Presbyterian Church, Allen-street, Kensington, by the Rev. D. McColl, Frank Bullen, fourth son of William Edgcumbe Rendle, of 22, Westgate-terrace, South Kensington, to Alexandrina Mitchell, daughter of Walter Forsyth, Esq., of Kinross, Scotland.

DEATHS.

GILL.—May 8, at Elmwood, Blackheath Park, the residence of her brother-in-law, Stephen M. Osmond, Esq., Annie S., the youngest daughter of the Rev. George Gill, of Burnley, aged 21.

MCASLANE.—May 9, at Balclutha House, St. Mark's-square, West Hackney, Margaret, wife of the Rev. Dr. McAulane, aged 53.

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LONDON: WEDNESDAY, MAY 14, 1879.

GRATIS.

WITH THE CONGREGATIONAL UNION. (From our own Correspondent.)

The Leicester Conference controversy having died out, and nothing else of a disturbing kind having taken its place, the annual meetings of the Congregational Union have been anticipated with quiet rather than eager expectancy. Yet the "business meeting" at the Memorial Hall on Monday night was more largely attended than usual, and the stand-up tea in the library seemed to be a livelier affair than ever. No wonder; for the country brethren are there in force, and there is a better opportunity for friendly greetings and for gossip than is presented at any of the Union meetings. The weather, too, has improved, and though almost everybody has to tell of colds and other winter and spring ailments, everybody now hopes that at last genial weather, as well as spring, has come.

After the meeting had been opened by a short devotional service, the Rev. W. Cuthbertson, of Bishop's Stortford, the chairman for the year, in a very few sentences, thanked the Union for the honour it had done him, and at once the meeting proceeded to business. Scrutineers to examine the balloting papers for the committee were appointed, and also the chairman for next year. Dr. Newth, Principal of New College, had been powerfully nominated, and was unanimously chosen; there being no competitor. Being called up, and received with cheers, he modestly expressed a doubt as to his fitness, but yielded to the judgment of those who had seen fit to elect him. Then came the report, read by Mr. Hannay. It was a thoroughly business-like document, and lengthy; but it was listened to throughout with interest, rather than with patience.

The appointment of a committee to consider possible reforms in the college system of Nonconformists was the first topic, and it is one the importance of which is evident enough. The committee is a large and representative one, and its tentative proceedings promise well for the ultimate result. The leading idea of the proposed changes is the making of the colleges places for theological instruction only; leaving students to secure a purely literary training at the English and Scotch universities, Owens College, and similar institutions. Another point is the raising of the standard of acquirement on admission; and a third the allotment of fewer subjects to the theological professors. The consolidation, or confederation, of the existing colleges will be aimed at hereafter; co-operation being, as far as possible, secured now. The celebration of the Jubilee of the Union in 1881 is being already prepared for; arrangements for lectures, publications, and sermons being in a forward state. It was expressly stated that the object of this jubilee movement will not be to make war upon other denominations, but to teach Congregational principles, and to trace those principles in the history of the past. The projected conference with other Evangelical bodies, with a view to common Evangelical action, was admitted to be a difficult and delicate business; but a hope was expressed that by the autumn something will be done to put the matter into a practical shape. The recommendation to the County Associations to form confidential committees, to facilitate the removal and settlement of ministers was another item of the report pointing to new action. There was great cheering when the very emphatic resolution passed by the committee with reference to the Afghan war was read. Then followed references to the proposed changes in the constitution of the Union, consequent on the formation of the London Union, and to the secretariat of the Church Aid Association; the report closing, as usual, with obituary notices of departed Congregationalists. These included the Rev. Robert Ashton, the Rev. Samuel Martin, and the Rev. A. Braden, and two laymen—Mr. John Crossley and Mr. Hadfield. Discriminating and happily expressed, these notices were received with warmly sympathetic cheers.

In the report was incorporated the annual report of the trustees of the Memorial Hall, which contained three statements of interest—first, that that building has cost 76,000£., of which only 2,000£. remains unpaid; second, that the works in the

library—10,000 in number—have now been catalogued; and, third, that the road in front of the hall will shortly be paved with wood. The first of these announcements seemed to excite most surprise, and the last most satisfaction.

Mr. Hannay had to do treasurer's as well as secretary's duty, in presenting the several financial statements, which appeared to be regarded as satisfactory; and then the Rev. R. Bruce, of Huddersfield, moved the adoption of the report in a pointed and vivacious little speech. He said that the condemnation pronounced on the Afghan war was equally applicable to the war against the Zulus—a sentiment which the meeting did not fail to endorse. The motion was briefly seconded and was carried, as was also one appointing the officers. Then came the only resolution at all likely to provoke discussion, viz., that for altering the Union rules, by making the London Union, instead of the London Congregational Board, responsible for returning the members of the Union in the metropolis. Mr. Hannay moved the resolution, explaining that the old arrangement was only intended to be temporary, and that the new arrangement would widen, rather than contract, the door of admission. Of course, this would have afforded any one so minded the opportunity of stirring up the embers of a disagreeable dispute; but either no such person was present, or the evident wish of the members to be off, discouraged any such attempt; and so the resolution was carried without any discussion, and it is to be hoped that it will put an end to the "Year Book" difficulties which have for some time past troubled the editor and the committee. There remained nothing but the election of honorary members, and in a little more than an hour and a half the meeting came to a close.

Another change in the Union's place of meeting—the first meeting of the Assembly, on Tuesday, being held in Christ Church (the Rev. Newman Hall's), Westminster Bridge-road. If Union Chapel, Islington, was last year found to be inconvenient, because out of the way, Christ Church is scarcely better in that respect, and in some others it is decidedly worse. It has none of the compactness of the northern building, and looks too large and cold for such a gathering. The platform, thrown back in the chancel—as I suppose it may be called—seemed to be outside the meeting; and as, for the sake of hearing, the speakers, as well as the chairman, took to the pulpit, most of them seemed to get into a sermonising style. The ground floor was nearly filled with delegates, and visitors about filled, without crowding, the galleries.

Mostly, two speculative questions are put prior to the delivery of the chairman's address to the Union—first, What will be its topic? and next, How long is it likely to be?—with, sometimes, the added question, How is it likely to be heard? Well! Mr. Cuthbertson must have satisfied expectation under the first head, since he was happy in his choice of a topic of current interest, and also of practical interest. Next, he had the good sense to occupy only an hour, instead of nearly two; and, if his elocution in reading had been more flexible and varied, his success would, I think, have been complete. Evidently he was guided in the choice of his subject by Mr. Baldwin Brown's attack on the recent policy of the Union, though Mr. Brown was not referred to. It was "Organised Independency;" and the address starting with a congratulatory reference to the formation of the Church Aid Society, at once admitted that strong objections had been taken, not only to that work, but to the spirit which created it. They were, in fact, face to face with two distinct policies; but the speaker did not, as he might have done, define those policies very clearly, or examine very closely the objections to which he made reference. He proceeded to refer to the past mission and achievements of Independency, and to insist on the necessity for united and organised action. The necessity for this was shown by reference to four distinct spheres in which such action is urgently demanded. In these were included London, the large towns, Oxford and Cambridge, and the country districts. With reference to the last, Mr. Cuthbertson not only himself spoke with evidently strong conviction, but elicited a decidedly sympathetic response from the many persons from the country present in the meeting. Mr. Binney's remark

that "we have nothing to gain by multiplying little churches and little men" had cut deep; but we must know what the term "little" means; and the description given of the country minister's difficulties, and of his exertions, was characterised by both feeling and eloquence. "The average country minister," he said, "need not come before us bringing in his hand an *apologia pro vita sua*; but might even in this great gathering present a modest challenge for brotherly regard." Then the claims of the colonies, of the English-speaking people of Wales, and also of Ireland were reviewed; the passage relating to the colonies containing the most striking things—as might be expected from a minister so conversant with religious life in Australia. It was hardly possible to close the address without some political or semi-political allusions, and they came very effectively in the closing passages. After recent acts which had discredited the name of England, the question might be "wonderfully asked, Is this then the outcome of so many centuries of Christian teaching? How can these things be, after all the ages of Christian toil and sacrifice? Is the fruit of all our past, this conception of England's future greatness—vastness of territory, imperial position, and material wealth?" But the madness of the hour was fast dying, and sober Christians might look forward to a time when "this great people shall esteem it their very crown, not to be the imperial rulers of Eastern millions, but themselves servants of Jesus Christ." The close of the address was followed by the continued cheering of a too fatigued audience.

After the appointment of a "Reference Committee," and an announcement as to three overcoats, which it was almost suggested had been stolen the night before—and which much amused those who hadn't lost their coats—the meeting settled down again to hear a paper by Dr. Clemane, of Camberwell, on "The Responsibilities of the Churches in regard to Christian Work in England." It was in all respects admirable, thoughtful, suggestive, wise, and practical, and was read with freedom and vivacity which made it agreeable to listen to. Some of the writer's facts—especially about London—were very striking, and others of them telling by way of encouragement and example. An elaborate resolution, proposed by the Rev. J. Radford Thomson and the Rev. P. Colborne, was based upon the paper, and, as its practical purpose, commended the Church Aid and Home Missionary Society to the support of the churches. Three other speeches were volunteered; but I don't think they did much to deepen the impression which Dr. Clemane's paper had produced.

Then came a resolution condemning in emphatic terms the foreign policy of the Government, or rather the wars in India and South Africa. The speech of the Rev. W. Crosbie, of Derby, the mover, kindled more enthusiasm than had been shown throughout the morning. It was very strong in matter, and perhaps a little too intense in delivery—if that could be possible with an audience feeling so strongly on the subject. It contained a very severe indictment against the Government, of which, it was urged, the country should rid itself without delay; and the fact that in past times Independency had saved the country in one of the gravest periods of its history was made the basis of an appeal to Independents to do their duty now. The Rev. A. H. Byles seconded the motion in a speech containing some good points. His comparison of the Government with the eyes of a fool, at the "ends of the earth," excited much laughter. The Rev. J. G. Rogers followed; his practical point being that at the general election it would be unsafe to ignore everything but questions of foreign policy. Mr. Richard, M. P., created some amusement by saying that he was glad for once to find himself in accord, on a question of peace or war, not with the Union, but with "the high priests and rulers of the synagogue." He also elicited much applause by his contrast between the principles of Bishop Claughton and Bishop Colenso in regard to the African war; saying that he would rather be a heterodox bishop upholding the cause of humanity and right, than an orthodox bishop whose hands were stained with human blood. Dr. Melor was called for, but only gave some humorous reasons why he should not speak, and then the resolution was carried, with, however, three dissentients. And, as two o'clock had come, the business of first sitting was soon brought to an end.

A remark in Mr. Cuthbertson's paper on the good work which Christian laymen had done in the colonies suggests to me the idea that the Congregational Union seems to be getting increasingly ministerial. When Mr. Richard was placed in the chair, the laymen thought they had scored a point, but the ministers are having their innings now. For every name in the printed programme of the proceedings this week is that of a minister. So, too, every one of the proposed Jubilee lecturers in 1881 is a minister, and probably all the proposed tract writers are ministerial likewise. All this may be quite accidental, and if so—*verbum sap!*

BRITISH AND FOREIGN BIBLE SOCIETY.

The seventy-fifth annual meeting of this society took place last Wednesday in Exeter Hall. The Earl of Shaftesbury, the president of the society, took the chair at eleven o'clock. Besides the speakers mentioned below there were present the Bishop of Sodor and Man, Bishop Perry, Alford, and Ryan, the Dean of Ripon, Sir W. Maire, Sir Charles Reed, a number of well-known Evangelical clergymen, Dr. Underhill, Dr. Raleigh, Dr. J. H. Wilson, &c. The large room was filled, but not over-crowded. After singing and Scripture reading and prayer by the Rev. Charles Jackson,

The Rev. CHARLES E. B. REED, M.A., assistant secretary, read the report. After some prefatory remarks with regard to the basis of the work, the committee said the past year in France was like the opening of a fine day. A strong wave of anti-clerical feeling was passing over the land, and the result was seen in a greater willingness to welcome the Gospel. Theatres, opened to Evangelical pastors and laymen, were thronged with eager listeners, and in about ten departments a decided movement towards Protestantism was apparent. In some cases the existence of flourishing churches could be traced directly to the labours of the society's colporteurs. In one village, for example, there was a congregation formed of 150 persons who had quitted the Church of Rome. The improved state of feeling had told favourably on the work of the committee in connection with the Paris Exhibition. Great kindness was shown by the officials, and the number of visitors who refused the Scriptures was very small. The châtel outside not having proved as serviceable as was expected, in consequence of its having to be carted off, the colporteurs were employed in the broad thoroughfares in distributing single Gospels, and in that way from 1,500 to 2,500 copies were given daily. This outdoor work was quite independent of the very successful and large efforts made at the Trouadero by persons connected with the Crystal Palace Bible stand and through the medium of the Scotch Society. Inside the Exhibition there was a complete collection of the different translations of the Scriptures, attracting the attention of numbers of visitors, including some Roman Catholic priests, and 110,000 Gospels were given away, their noble president and other members of the society who visited Paris aiding in the work. The sales at the Exhibition amounted to only 1,700 copies, but the gratuitous circulation exceeded 40,000. Already news was beginning to come in through the colporteurs in the provinces of fruit from the seed thus sown. That this special effort had not interfered with the general work in France was shown by the fact that the ordinary sales had increased during the year from 75,000 to 98,000. In Germany wonderful elasticity still marked the circulation of the Scriptures, which had risen by an addition of 20,000 in the past year to a total of 354,000, of which more than 100,000 were entire Bibles. In the sixty-six colporteurs employed by the Rev. G. Palmer Davies, were a body of men of which any society might feel proud. Illustrations of their labours were here given. It was the share taken by the Austrian agency in its war work that had brought it alike its chief labour and its chief distinction. From the beginning of the war to the end of January last there had been disseminated among the troops in Roumania and Bulgaria 242,000 copies, chiefly New Testaments, and among the Army of the Caucasus 194,000, making a total of all but half a million books among the Russian forces. The cost to the society in books, carriage, and colportage could not be estimated at less than 24,000. Nothing could have been effected without great favour on the part of the military authorities, and the utmost determination on the part of the agents employed. In one case an officer peremptorily stopped two of the colporteurs; but the same evening he came to their lodgings, apologised for his rudeness, said his brother officers had been explaining to him the nature of their work, and purchased twenty copies for his own men, begging them at the same time to return to the camp where the soldiers were awaiting them. When in the autumn the Austrian troops marched into Bosnia, three of the society's colporteurs went with them. That journey of twenty-six days was a gallant piece of work. The road was one mass of sticky mud, no shelter was to be had at night for man or beast, torrents of rain kept all drenched to the skin, and fever laid its grip on two of the colporteurs. These men used the intervals of a breakdown in the train of 500 military wagons in lightening their own wagon, which was piled tower-high with Scriptures, and they sold over 1,000 copies to soldiers on the march. The ordinary work of Mr. Millard's agency in Austria proper and Bohemia had been beset by difficulties, and a vexatious interference on the part of the authorities which ill became a Power that stood before Europe as a guarantor of religious liberty to the oppressed provinces of Turkey. In Italy a large staff of colporteurs continue to be employed, and the circulation—50,900—was a trifle above that of 1877. The law in Spain still forbade public manifestations and left it to every local magistrate to give his own definition, so that in many parts great restrictions were imposed on the colporteurs. They had, however, quietly pursued their way, and sold about as many copies as in 1877. The Biblewomen in Madrid had in the past two years and a half received 76/- from the poor in small weekly payments for the Scriptures. In Portugal the laws which had been passed to check the power of the priests seemed to have goaded them into revenge,

and one of the colporteurs had been made a victim. Sixteen years ago he was charged with speaking against the religion of the State, but the matter had remained in abeyance till now, when he had been put on his trial and actually sentenced to twelve months' imprisonment, the jury being resolute against him, though the judge declared in his favour. After remaining in prison for a month, and doing within its walls an apostolic work, he had by the help of private friends and of the committee bought his liberty; but it was still felt that public opinion in England ought to be expressed on the injustice of his punishment. The operations of the North Russian Agency still developed, aided by the favour of the authorities, who recognised the benevolent aim of the society and its complete independence of politics. The committee could not but view with deep concern the machinations of the Nihilists, culminating as they had done in the late atrocious attempt on the life of the Czar. The circulation had risen to 253,000, and much had been done for the Turkish prisoners. In Southern Russia greater activity had been exhibited. The progress there was unprecedented. For the decade ending in 1868 the annual circulation was 5,000; for the last ten years it had been 57,000; and now, apart from the war issues, the ordinary demand had increased to 70,000. In Turkey, as might have been anticipated, the year had been one of restricted opportunity, and the circulation declined from 21,000 to 17,000. A worthy man had been sent out to Cyprus, where he had opened a depot and received much encouragement. In South Africa versions were in progress for the Nama, Hottentot, and Herero tribes, and much valuable aid had been given to the auxiliaries by a deputation from the Society of Friends. The Bombay Auxiliary furnished Scriptures to the British and native regiments on their way to the African frontier. The recent famine in South India was being used by God as an instrument for inclining thousands to Christianity. The new agent of the society in Australia, the Rev. J. T. Evans, had met with a cordial welcome from the various auxiliaries. Amid the foreign efforts the committee had sought to meet in a generous spirit the applications that had reached them from all parts of England and Wales. Two years ago a deficiency of over 5,000/- had to be reported, and last year one of 15,000/- This year the deficiency threatened to be even greater, and the committee felt it their duty to correspond with their principal foreign agents with a view to a reduction of expenses, and at the same time to make a special appeal to their friends at home. The response to the appeal was most liberal. Up to the end of March, 10,180/- 3s. 8d. had been received—a sum which included not only many handsome donations from individuals but contributions from a number of auxiliaries at home and in the colonies, which took up the appeal in the heartiest way.

The free income of the society for the year ending 31st March, 1879, has amounted to 96,426/- 11s. 5d., whilst the sum received for Scriptures sold, both at home and abroad, has reached 106,168/- 15s. 10d., which, with 186/- 10s. received on account of a special fund for Indian Colportage, 899/- 2s. 4d. for work at the Paris Exhibition, and 10,180/- 3s. 8d. in response to the committee's special appeal, makes a total of 213,811/- 3s. 3d. The expenditure has amounted to 223,476/- 15s. 2d., being 4,389/- 2s. 11d. less than last year. The issues of the society for the year are as follows:—From the depot at home, 1,415,214; from depots abroad, 1,925,781; 3,340,995 copies of Bibles, Testaments, and portions. The total issues of the society from its commencement now amount to 85,388,057 copies.

The Archbishop of Canterbury was to have been present, but the chairman said his grace had sent a letter expressing his regret at his non-appearance owing to the unexpected death of his friend and chaplain, Archdeacon Fisher, vicar of Kennington.

The Bishop of GLOUCESTER AND BRISTOL, in moving the adoption of the report, after a brief reference to the above announcement, and an apology for his own inability to do justice to his theme, said that the report was both instructive and deeply encouraging. From it they heard of the increase of the circulation of the Bible in France, the marked increase of the circulation in Germany, and then, setting aside the special efforts made with the Russian army, that God's Word was making way in that nation, now probably more tried than any nation in Europe, the great empire of Russia. They must, too, have heard with great interest of the increasing zeal, activity, and intrepidity of that noble band of men the colporteurs, who, often at the danger of their very lives, carried in their hands the blessed and living Word of God. But he wished specially to speak of those great, true, and earnest spirits who had been or were now engaged in translating the Bible into the various languages of the world. He believed there were 187 portions of the Bible published, but not so many as sixty translations of the entire Scriptures in the different languages of the world. That work was indeed arduous, and the right rev. prelate pictured the difficulties encountered by the devoted translators:—

He has to call around him as well as he can those whom he is preaching to; he has to take down phonetically their words and mould them into something like living language. He has to supply all the difficulties of grammar. He has to be himself, through the medium of those he speaks to, his own lexicon, and with these scanty materials he begins to endeavour to turn the Word of God into the language of those he addresses. Think of the difficulty of the task. Take

for example the chapter which our secretary read to us a few minutes ago—17th of St. John's Gospel. Think of turning that chapter into a strange language. Those expressions familiar to us as part of the religious life are not to be found, perhaps, or are only to be expressed by a long circumlocution, in the language that the missionary is attempting to write down. And yet we know he is enabled to do it. Wonderful as is the work of this society, providential as I regard all its greater efforts, there seems to me, when I meditate upon it, something greater still in the blessing—the powerful present blessing that goes with the machinery engaged in preparing the translation which I am endeavouring to sketch out. And what results there are! I am one of those who sometimes venture to think that they fear the poor name of a scholar. (Cheers.) And there are names which, with a so-called scholar's instinct, I reverence—those who have recovered ancient languages from the scantiest materials—who out of the very stones on which they have trodden with their feet have presented to us, almost constructed, an articulated language. In this category I may mention Bowmouf, one of the most eminent in recovering the Zend language, Grossfeud and Lassen, who brought to light the languages of ancient and primeval Italy, and our own Rawlinson, through whose labours we obtained a knowledge of the cuneiform inscriptions which are in the British Museum. But these seem to me as nothing when I look on the face of one whom I shall shortly name. All these great efforts seem to pale in my memory as I looked upon the face of that glorious old man who, by the labours of many years, has translated the whole Bible into the difficult Bechuanas languages—I mean the venerable Moffat. (Loud applause.) I knew that name would touch your sympathy. And now having mentioned that name, let me pass rapidly, very rapidly, to the picture of translators under difficulties of a different kind. Let us turn now from the savage world to which our thoughts have been directed to the translations into the ancient languages of the Oriental world. Think of the difficulties of those who essay to translate the living Word of God into those ancient and in many cases vanishing languages. What difficulties! Let us pass before our thoughts for a moment the more cultivated languages of India and that strange language, the Chinese, and the lengthened traditions and the language of that land which perhaps more than any other land is now opening for good—the great Empire of Japan.

Their work was mightily prospering, and their society was stimulating the activity of revising committees in various parts of the world. Four missionaries in Madagascar were co-operating with a view to a revised edition of the Bible, and by the end of the year two American missionaries, Mr. Gobell and Dr. Hopkinson, hoped to produce a translation of the New Testament into Japanese, to be followed by the whole Bible. With that last work the Japanese Minister in this country sympathised. From what he had said he drew the conclusion that the work being carried on was of itself an enduring evidence of the enduring faith of God's Holy Word, the Book of the soul of man. (Cheers.)

The Hon. JOHN WELSH (the United States Minister), who was greeted with loud cheers, in seconding the resolution said he greatly rejoiced that among the people he had the honour to represent in this country, there was a feeling not less zealous than their own in behalf of this great and good cause, and they gladly co-operated in promoting it. (Cheers.) The American translation of the Scriptures for Zululand was bound up by their own Bible Society, and he took that as a happy illustration of the relations that exist between them, and which, he hoped, would ever continue—(loud applause)—so that in good works they should not only be competitors, but when occasion presented, unite cordially and earnestly. (Cheers.) Looking at the matter from the layman's standpoint, he believed that a conscience enlightened by the Bible would direct them aright, and that it was the basis of all their hopes of civil and religious liberty. (Cheers.) If they recognised the principle contained in the passage, "Whatsoever ye would that others should do to you, even so do to them," they could circulate that book with confidence, and with the array of workers he saw before him, that society could want neither support nor supporters. (Cheers.)

The resolution having been carried and a hymn sung,

The Rev. CANON TRISTRAM, who was loudly applauded, moved the next resolution:—

That this meeting desires to acknowledge with devout gratitude the goodness of God in the blessing which has rested upon the society's labours during the past year, and appeals to all to whom God's Word is precious for enlarged sympathy and support in the prosecution of its important work.

He said it seemed to him that in this age, in which the great battle against Christianity was levelled against the Bible itself, and against the inspiration of the Bible as God's immutable Word, the work of the Bible Society had hardly begun. In many countries the Bible Society, although it was commonly said to be the missionary's tool, had gone ahead of the missionary. Some five years ago he went with a missionary to the city of Karak, which was independent of Turkish rule, and found they were the first ministers of the Gospel who had been there. Most of these people were Mahomedans, but there was a sprinkling of Christians belonging to the Greek Church, who had a school in the place, which he was allowed to visit. He found there, in that wild Arab town, Mahomedan boys being taught by a Greek deacon; and what were the books in use? There were books of the Church Missionary Society in the lower class, and in the upper class, a row of Mahomedan boys were sitting in front of the Greek deacon, and were reading the Gospel of St. John out of books translated by the noble American missionary, Vandyke, into the Arabic tongue, with a strap of the British and

Foreign Bible Society at their back. The Bible Society had got there ahead of the Missionary Society, but not for long, he was glad to say, for they had now got a missionary there, and he hoped they should keep him, not a prisoner, but a free agent. (Applause.) A deceased friend of his, an eminent Church scholar, the late Robert Swinnow, some time ago went up the Yangtze-Kiang to penetrate to Thibet. On the south-west frontier he came to a town in the province of Si-chuen. He was dressed as a native. He found there an edict from the chief mandarin of the place warning the people to have nothing to do with the religion of the white devils. (Laughter.) Well, sauntering on, he came to a bookseller's shop, examined the contents, and talked to the bibliophile, and found that he was driving a brisk trade in the sale of home-printed Chinese Gospels. The bookseller said that the Mahomedans had warned the people against the religion of the white devils; they wanted to know what that religion was, and so the man was driving a very brisk trade. (Laughter and applause.) The missionary without the Bible was like a workman without his tools. The Romanists said they, like the apostles, could do without the Bible, though the Lord said, "Search the Scriptures." The Bible was the great object of attack now, no doubt. Men told them its moral principles were perfect—it was the best morality in the world, but they wanted to have the morality without its framework. What they disliked was the law and the definite principles of the Bible. They dislike those rough stones broken from the rock by the hand of God, untrimmed and unshaped by the hands of men. They had at the present moment two mighty armies, each organised, and each marching on its separate course, and each converging to the same point—the inspiration of the Bible as God's Word. They had the material attack, and what was called "the higher criticism." The former wanted idol gods and an expansive religion; one that would take their impression—not a stern, severe code of absolute right and wrong to which they must conform and mould themselves. They welcomed the latter. They admired criticism which removed difficulties, cleared obscurities, and added emphasis as to difficult passages. But "the higher criticism" which evoked the craven fears of superficial sciolists, and prompted them to spread unreasonable panic amongst timid Christians, was, so to speak, "evolved out of its inner consciousness."

A series of Assyrian records are produced which amplify the whole of the early history of Genesis; and this ingenious criticism can, forsooth, discover Genesis to be a patchwork quilt of a number of passages ingeniously sewn together at a later age. This ingenious criticism says that, when you found the name Cyrus mentioned in the Book of Isaiah, you would of course conclude that that book was written after Cyrus, and that therefore Isaiah was written after Cyrus. If higher criticism means to dissolve and dissipate the Bible by such acidulated mixtures as these, then we pour contempt upon all so-called criticism and disintegrating acids. (Applause.)

The speaker proceeded to show that the historic side of the Bible now stands to the outside world—to the unbelieving critic—in a very different position from what it had done of old. The opponents of Christianity, the impugners of the Bible, determinately ignored but could not refute the statement that they, their representatives, their progenitors, their fore-elders, from the time of Voltaire to that of Colenso, had said that certain books were the fraudulent inventions of a later age, and that assumption reigned supreme amongst sceptics in England, France, and Germany for a century, until Layard began to dig, and "Botta began to read, and Rawlinson began to expound." All this was changed. They were now compelled to admit the historic character of the Bible, although they perversely denied the supernatural. He mentioned an Arabic proverb he had learned from an Arab guide, whose attention he had directed to an ancient ruin bearing the three leopards of Richard Coeur de Lion. The guide pointed to a name written in Arabic, and said, "Books may lie, but stones cannot." The speaker went on—

Just at the very time when this criticism of the inner consciousness had overrun Germany, and was invading England, and when these speculations were turning the heads of the young men at the old universities, a few, quiet, indefatigable explorers began to dig, and they have turned up from their graves many an old buried stone, and things that have been dumb for 3,000 years have become vocal again. Sargon, who was only referred to once in a passing allusion in Isaiah, and never mentioned again in prophecy, is restored to his niche in the genealogy of kings. These things awoke great attention in literary circles, and they have directed men's attention to the study of the Bible as a book of history. Not only have these critics ceased to impugn the historical accuracy of the books of the Kings, and the earlier books of the Bible, from Exodus downwards, but, within the last few years—I may say months—there is a flood of literature speaking from the graves of the Euphrates, and taking us back almost to the lifetime of Noah. (Applause.)

"Why, my lord," exclaimed Canon Tristram, "every stone rebukes the vanity of these critics. You cannot go to the British Museum and look at that black obelisk and the records of Sennacherib; you cannot go to Paris and gaze on the Moabitish Stone; you cannot look at those cuneiform inscriptions, and read the translation of them, without seeing that it is impossible now to question the harmony of the Word of God with every incident of history, as far back as history goes." He thought the Bible Society had great cause for thankfulness in the very interests which these attacks upon God's Word had aroused in other circles than

those of believers. There had never been a greater blessing to the world of Biblical criticism than the shallow books of Dr. Colenso, which led to the foundation of the Palestine Exploration Fund. As he looked at those two societies—the Palestine Exploration Fund and the Biblical Archaeological Society—and saw the plans and excavations of the one, and the volumes of ancient literature proceeding from the press of the other, he felt, indeed, that in all those volumes of the records of the past, worked out in the literature of the one society, and the surveying of the other, they had been stirring up thousands of the thoughtful men. Scholars, who did not otherwise take an interest in the Bible, might have been led to study God's Word, and the more they were studying it they were giving it a respect and reverence which he was thankful to know, in his own circle, had, in more than one instance, resulted in direct conversion and surrender of the heart to God. (Applause.)

The Rev. J. SIBREE, jun., missionary from Madagascar, where he has resided some sixteen years, in seconding the resolution, said that the progress of the Gospel in that island had been inseparably connected with the reading and studying of the Word of God. There, as well as elsewhere where the London Missionary Society worked, it was their foremost aim to give to the people the Holy Scriptures in their own language. (Cheers.) In putting the first sheets of the Gospel of Luke to press upon New Year's Day of 1828, the first missionaries wrote: "We wish to hallow the new year of the missionary service by opening the fountain of living waters in the midst of this parched ground. May the healing streams ere long flow into a thousand channels, and transform it into the garden of the Lord!" (Applause.) So soon did those early missionaries—all honour to their memories—Jones, Griffiths, Johns, Jeffrey, and Freeman, all but one of them Welshmen, strive to open up to their converts the treasures of wisdom and knowledge which were hidden in the Holy Scriptures. (Applause.) In the seventeenth century Jesuit missionaries had considerable influence in Madagascar, but they never made an attempt to translate for their people a single book either of the Old or New Testaments, no history or prophecy, or gospel or epistle. Where was the result of their labours? It had absolutely vanished, and left no trace at all among the people, no doubt because they taught for doctrine the commandments of men, and deliberately withheld from their people the Scriptures, which would have made them wise unto salvation. But what a striking contrast the history of Protestant missions exhibited! After fifteen or sixteen years' short labour, their predecessors were able to leave with their converts the whole Word of God as their legacy, and that proved to be the incorruptible seed which liveth and abideth for ever. (Applause.) The religion of their people was founded on, was derived from, "nothing else but reading the Bible"; and it was just because it was so, and had such a Scriptural foundation, that numerous and powerful as the Romish mission was, it had hitherto exerted comparatively little power upon a people naturally prone to superstition. (Applause.) The Bible had such an influence in Madagascar that even members of the Society of Jesus were driven to a thoroughly Pauline style of argument, and for the time to ignore the claim of authority, and to say in effect, "I speak as unto wise men; judge ye what I say." One great means of impressing the truths of the Gospel upon their people in Madagascar was not only the public preaching and worship on the Lord's Day, but the large use made by every missionary of Bible-classes. Most of them had charge of extensive districts, comprising a considerable number of village congregations. These they grouped together in sub-centres, which they visited as frequently as possible. Then they got their pastors, preachers, deacons, and most intelligent church members, their earnest Christian women, and schools, and four or five hours they gave to systematic Scripture teaching. Such classes were very powerful for good, and were doing a great work in enlightening the minds of the people. In a more familiar social way than could well be employed in a large congregation they got very close to their people, were able to solve their difficulties, to answer their questions, and to impress God's truth upon their minds. He had often felt that if he had been able to do any good in Madagascar it had been at such Bible-class teaching as these. (Applause.) The stories of the Bible came to the Malagasy with such a freshness and beauty that they seemed invested with a new charm to those who taught them to the people. And so, from such teaching as this the Bible was gaining year by year more power in the central provinces of the island. It was purifying society, raising the tone of morality and social life, shaming out immorality, polygamy, and divorce, sanctifying family life, and making marriage more and more a sacred thing, putting down cruel customs and laws, and ameliorating war. (Applause.) Some six years ago it became necessary to put down an insurrection in the southwest of Madagascar. Before the army started the Prime Minister reminded the officers that their enemies were also the Queen's subjects, and that they must not carry on war as formerly, for they were Christians now:

Well, that army went away, and one division of it was able to pacify the country without taking a single life. (Applause.) The native chief was invited to the tent of the commander, and here he was shown a New Testament. The commander said: "This is the Book

from which we Christians learn what is right, and according to this Book, we never put to death or punish the upright, as we often did while still heathen, but the guilty must be punished, for this is the Word of God and the law of the Queen." The following day there was another interview, terms of peace were agreed upon, a beautiful copy of the New Testament was given to the native chief, and the commander said to him, "If ever we make war upon you or without just cause, or kill or punish the guiltless, show us this Book, then, indeed, we shall be self-condemned." (Applause.) In another native account of this same expedition, it is said that these heathen chiefs came and asked some of the Christian officers, "How is it that you people from Imerina do not now come to destroy our country and enslave us as you did in former times?" And they were answered, "Because Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Redeemer of man, has given the Gospel to teach mankind to show mercy." And so, when that army was about to return, a most favourable impression was left upon those heathen people, and they said: "We see that this religion you福音 profess is not a weakening of your strength so that you can't fight, but it is a showing of mercy." I think, my lord and Christian friends, that that was a valuable testimony to the reality of the change which the study of the Word of God had worked upon many of those Hova people. The heathen saw that it was more than mere words, talk, or preaching, and that the Gospel had produced a very real and unmistakable change in their conduct and their lives. That military expedition really became a missionary expedition to some of the most unenlightened tribes, and opened up the way for the advance of the Gospel. (Cheers.)

The Rev. F. W. MACDONALD moved the next resolution as follows:—

That the thanks of this meeting be given to the president and vice-presidents for their continued patronage; also to Joseph Hoare, Esq., vice-president and treasurer, who is requested to continue his services. That grateful thanks be also presented to the officers, committees, and collectors of the various auxiliaries, branches, and associations throughout this country and the colonies; to whose untiring zeal and energy the society is again indebted for so large an amount of free contributions during the past year, and to whom they would earnestly appeal for a continuance of their efficient and valuable services; and that the following gentlemen be the committee for the ensuing year, with power to fill up vacancies.

The Rev. Dr. JOHNSON, of Belfast, in seconding the resolution, said he had long felt the ministers of the different churches of this kingdom did not realise as they ought to do their obligations to that society. Ministers and elders and churchwardens and all other workers in the cause of religion derived the weapons of their warfare from that source, and they ought to recognise their obligations much more practically than they had hitherto done.

The resolution was then put and carried.

The Hon. and Rev. E. CARE GLYN then moved the following:—

That the warmest thanks of this meeting be given to the Right Hon. the Earl of Shaftesbury, K.G., president, for his lordship's kind attention to the business of the day.

He was sure that large meeting wished to express their gratitude to God for having allowed the president of the society to take the chair once more. (Cheers.)

The Rev. Dr. MOFFAT, who was greeted with loud and prolonged cheers, said he was glad to be permitted to be present at that delightful meeting. No other society was so dear to him as the Bible Society. The Bible was a power; he had witnessed its influence over and over again amongst savage people and among all kinds of people; he had felt its force in his own heart, and he had witnessed its operation in hearts which were before as hard as a stone. He should never forget meeting on one occasion—it was a considerable time after the Gospel was first preached among the Bechuanas, and after some converts had been made among them—an elderly man whom he knew and who then looked very downcast. His face was elongated as he had never seen it before. He (Dr. Moffat) said to him, "What is the matter, who is dead?" "Oh," the man replied, "there is no one dead." He then asked him what was the matter, as he appeared to be mourning over something; and he replied, "My son tells me that my dog has eaten a leaf of his Bible." "Oh," he said, "perhaps I can replace it." Oh, but he has eaten it," said the man, "and he will never be of any use again; he will never fight again, and will be as tame as all those people are who believe in the Word of God. I am an old man, and have observed that the Word of God makes such a change in men that they become as gentle as women." (Cheers.) "Oh, my dog is done for," he added.

The resolution was carried by acclamation.

The noble CHAIRMAN, in responding, said:—I think this is the thirtieth time that I have taken the chair at our anniversary meeting of the British and Foreign Bible Society, and I cannot, therefore, suppose there can be anything novel in my statements or anything novel in the language in which I may convey them. All I can say is that though the expression of my sentiments may be old my feelings are perfectly fresh—(cheers)—as fresh at the present day as they were some thirty years ago when you first honoured me by electing me as your president, and gave me an opportunity of presiding over the operations of the most interesting and blessed society that was ever instituted through the grace of God. (Applause.)

The proceedings closed with the benediction.

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